

Submitter:

Erika Hernandez

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1583

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1583 because my life is proof that rehabilitation services work when they are properly funded and accessible.

There was a time when I was involved in the justice system and struggling with substance use. What changed my life was not punishment, paperwork, or another layer of oversight. What changed my life was access to treatment, accountability, peer support, and people who believed recovery was possible. Those services were not guaranteed, they existed because funding was directed to rehabilitation, not administration.

Today, I am a mom, a reliable employee, and a contributing member of my community. I work every day with individuals who are where I once was, scared, overwhelmed, and waiting for help. I see how fragile recovery can be when services are delayed, underfunded, or inconsistent. I also see how quickly lives turn around when treatment and peer support are available at the right time.

My concern with SB 1583 is that it restructures oversight in a way that risks pulling focus and funding away from direct rehabilitation services. Creating additional committees and shifting authority may look like progress on paper, but for people waiting for treatment beds, recovery housing, or peer support, it can mean more delays and fewer options. Those delays have real consequences. I have watched people relapse, return to jail, or lose their families while waiting for help that never came in time.

Rehabilitation services are not abstract policy concepts to me. They are the reason my children have a stable parent. They are the reason families stay together. They are the reason people involved in the justice system can become productive, sober, and accountable members of society. When funding for these services is uncertain or diluted, it is the people doing the hardest work and the people who need help the most who pay the price.

If Oregon truly wants to improve public safety and long-term outcomes, we must prioritize treatment, recovery support, and peer-led services, not expand bureaucracy at the expense of care. Recovery happens in real places, with real people, at critical moments, not in committee structures.

I respectfully urge lawmakers to oppose SB 1583 as written or amend it to explicitly protect and prioritize funding for direct rehabilitation services. My life, my family, and

the people I serve every day are living proof that when we invest in recovery, it works.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and considering the real human impact of this legislation.