



Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee

February 4, 2025

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1583

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The Oregon Black, Brown, and Indigenous Advocacy Organization (OBBIAC) submits this testimony in opposition to SB 1583.

OBBIAC is a coalition of organizations serving Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities across Oregon. Our members include culturally specific behavioral health providers, recovery and peer support programs, and reentry services. We work directly with communities most impacted by the war on drugs and provide essential services such as culturally responsive treatment, harm reduction, recovery housing, and community-based support focused on healing rather than punishment.

SB 1583 moves Oregon in the wrong direction by treating substance use as a criminal justice issue instead of a public health issue. Behavioral Health Resource Networks (BHRNs) are a critical part of Oregon's behavioral health system. They connect people to treatment, harm reduction, housing, and culturally responsive services. These services should remain within the Oregon Health Authority, the agency responsible for behavioral and public health, rather than being moved and siloed within an agency whose stated mission is "to improve the legitimacy, efficiency, and effectiveness of state and local criminal justice systems."

Oregonians widely recognize addiction as a public health crisis. Moving BHRNs away from OHA would be highly disruptive when stability is urgently needed. Providers and communities are already facing declining cannabis revenue and federal funding challenges. This bill risks destabilizing services while the need for care continues to grow.

The BHRN program needs stability, not more structural changes. The BHRN grant program is structured in ways that differ substantially from other programs CJC has historically managed. At the same time, CJC is in the midst of a major overhaul of its existing grant programs. Transferring responsibility for BHRNs under these conditions introduces unnecessary risk, administrative confusion, and delays—without any clear benefit to communities.



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A December 2025 Secretary of State audit warned that repeated legislative changes make it harder for providers, counties, and the state to have the continuity necessary to build the infrastructure needed to improve outcomes. BHRNs have already undergone multiple significant changes, including last session, and OHA and the Oversight and Accountability Council (OAC) recently finalized four-year grant agreements with providers. Moving the program now would delay services and create uncertainty for providers and for the people who rely on them.

SB 1583 also risks diverting treatment dollars into the criminal justice system and away from behavioral health. The bill allows grant funding to be used for law enforcement costs and for strategies such as deflection programs, community courts, and focused deterrence efforts. These strategies may be appropriate for other funding streams, but they should not come at the expense of behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment. Oregon already has separate funding streams for public safety and deflection. At a time when behavioral health resources are shrinking, this bill would move critical dollars away from care and into systems that have historically harmed Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. Redirecting treatment and recovery funding back toward law enforcement pulls Oregon back toward the same failed approaches of the past, instead of moving forward with investments that help people heal, stabilize, and rebuild their lives.

Finally, the OAC has played an important role in elevating the voices of communities most impacted by the war on drugs and guiding investments in culturally and linguistically specific services. Eliminating that role would undermine Oregon's commitment to health equity.

For these reasons, OBBIAC urges the legislature to reject SB 1583 and instead strengthen and stabilize Oregon's public health response to substance use.

Thank you for your consideration.

Oregon Black, Brown, and Indigenous Advocacy Coalition



**Fresh Out
Community Based
Reentry Program**



The Miracles Club





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Bringing A Community Together One Person at A Time



Out Of The Box Health Equity Coalition

