



Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Anderson and Gelser Blouin, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today. For the record my name is Brooke Hill and I am testifying today on behalf of Oregon AFSCME. We are a labor union of around 40,000 members advocating for workers and their families in the public and private sectors. We advocate for economic justice for workers and their families. I'm writing in support of HB 4083.

AFSCME has been an active participant in the creation and structure of this bill, working with other stakeholders and the Office of the First Lady to give input and provide the perspective of organized labor in the behavioral health space. I'd like to thank the First Lady for her leadership, and for elevating workers as this package was put together. I'd also like to thank her wonderful staff, who worked tirelessly to facilitate and direct much of the work that was done on this bill.

This legislation was developed in conjunction with the First Lady's Behavioral Health Talent Council. This table, chaired by First Lady Kotek Wilson, convened a group of experts in their respective issue areas– healthcare professionals, nonprofits, behavioral health employers and frontline workers, etc. The group met for several months, discussing topics like licensing, credentialing, workforce training & development, retention, and supporting frontline workers. The package that was produced from this workgroup is a commonsense set of reforms that will improve the Medicaid credentialing process and create a shared dashboard for licensing, reducing administrative burden, and improving accessibility in hiring. Streamlining these processes means that employers can hire qualified professionals more quickly, and that these professionals will be able to start work sooner. It will also aid in retention and workforce development.

AFSCME represents all different types of behavioral health workers. From transitional housing, residential facilities, DD/IDD services, and more, these workers dedicate their daily lives to serving the most vulnerable in our communities. Behavioral health is our fastest growing sector within the union, and yet our members are still stretched thin, struggling to keep pace with the increased need for care. HB 4083 is a step in the right direction to addressing the mental health crisis in Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I urge your support.

Sincerely,
Brooke Hill (she/her)
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