



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON

May 14, 2013

To: Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee  
Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair  
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair


Re: HB 2594 A – relating to commitment of person with mental illness - Support


The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a position on Adult Mental Health which supports a comprehensive and integrated adult mental health services delivery system which includes both community and state programs and facilities. The League supports an adult mental health civil commitment process which: ensures statewide consistency in the application of commitment statutes; provides for adequate and equitable investigation and examination; and protects the rights and needs of all interested parties.

This bill will allow the court to order assisted outpatient treatment for up to 12 months in an outpatient mental health program. The current commitment law is restrictive and often takes place in a hospital. A person with mental illness often avoids treatment until there is a crisis. This bill should offer an option sooner, before a medical crisis results in the hospitalization. Any improvement in access to mental health treatment is positive.

However, the new option may not be able to assist non-compliant persons with mental illness. Residential or hospital placements may be needed to stabilize the patients on medications, and supported housing may be needed to maintain that stability.

The League encourages increased funding for community mental health treatment, brief hospitalizations, and supported housing options. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

  
Robin Wisdom  
LWVOR President

  
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Social Policy Coordinator