



TO: Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher & Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot 110 Implementation
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon
DATE: March 16, 2021
RE: Testimony in Opposition to SB 189

Chair, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee:

Disability Rights Oregon submits this testimony in opposition to SB 189.

The Problem: As written, SB 189 would create more stringent requirements for trial visits that may not be necessary in every case

Civil commitment is one of the most invasive infringements that the state can make upon individual rights. Coercive, involuntary care provided during a civil commitment often has the unintended consequence of discouraging individuals from seeking voluntary treatment for fear of getting caught in the civil commitment process. Furthermore, civil commitments are major disruptions in individuals' lives: They may lose jobs, housing, pets or service animals, and find themselves struggling to access the specific community supports they had been accessing prior to the commitment.

During a trial visit, individuals have the opportunity to return to the community and go about stabilizing their lives after the disruptions a civil commitment causes. Strict mandates for specific services during a trial visit may subject people to interventions that are neither necessary nor desired. It is also unclear whether these mandated services are even available in many communities in Oregon which would limit an already cumbersome release process.

The Solution: Invest in community-based mental health services and support systems.

Whenever possible people should be receiving voluntary care in the community. Rather than mandating specific services during a trial visit, Oregon should invest in a robust continuum of care that understands the value of engagement and choice to support people in the least restrictive environment possible.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Disability Rights Oregon is a statewide nonprofit that upholds the civil rights of 950,000 people with disabilities in Oregon to live, work, and engage in the community. Disability Rights Oregon serves as a watchdog as we work to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their full potential. Since 1977, the organization has served as Oregon's federally authorized and mandated Protection & Advocacy System. Disability Rights Oregon is committed to ensuring the civil rights of all people are protected and enforced.