

**Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Moore-Green and Reynolds, Members of the Committee,**

My name is KC Lewis, and I am the managing attorney for the Mental Health Rights Project with Disability Rights Oregon. DRO very much appreciates your focus on providing much-needed services to people living with mental illness. This bill rightfully recognizes that people in mental health crisis often have multiple unmet needs, and that we can achieve better long-term results by identifying and addressing those needs. However, we worry that HB 4084 as it is currently written will have unintended effects on people with mental illness.

This bill requires that a person who is placed in custody for a civil commitment receive a comprehensive evaluation of the conditions that contributed to their need for commitment. It then requires that if the person is conditionally released or directed to assisted outpatient treatment, the person must receive the supportive services necessary to address the issues identified in the evaluation. Let me be clear: providing these services would be an enormous boon for both people with mental illness and our communities. We have advocated and will continue to advocate for those services to be made available. But currently, in many of our communities, they are not.

As written, this bill would prevent a person with mental illness from being conditionally released or referred for assistant outpatient treatment without having access to the supportive services that they need. In communities where those services are not available, this could lead to people being released without conditions or access to assisted outpatient treatment. More worryingly, it could lead to people with mental illness who would otherwise be eligible for conditional release instead being committed simply because the judge issuing the order is unable to meet the high bar of meeting all of the person's need for services. This could lead to people with mental illness being unnecessarily involuntarily hospitalized in violation of their right to be held in the least restrictive environment.

Again, we are fully in agreement with the motivation of this bill. The idea of a holistic evaluation of a person's needs when they are committed is a good one, but it must go hand in hand with providing the resources for these evaluations to be conducted and for these needs to be met. We are happy to work with the bill's sponsors to determine how this could be accomplished without infringing on the rights of people with mental illness. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
KC Lewis

Managing Attorney, Mental Health Rights Project