



February 8, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

Support for HB 2485

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwin and Members of the Committee:

I write today on behalf of Washington County in support of HB 2485 which would expand Portland State University's School of Social Work from 100 students to 200 students a year.

As you can see from our three-bill Three to Thrive package this year which was heard before this committee last week, Washington County is deeply concerned about Oregon's workforce issues which are being experienced quite strongly in the Health and Human Services space. We are glad to see Portland State University being responsive to not only our students but also to the behavioral health crisis that our state is facing.

We need all the help we can get with outcomes like this according to Mental Health America in 2022:

- Oregon is ranked 46th in the country in mental health care which indicates higher prevalence of mental illness and lower access to care.
- Oregon is also:
 - Ranked 49th in the Adult Ranking
 - Ranked 45th in the Youth Ranking

Our troublesome behavioral health system continues to create a myriad of challenges to our: communities of color, houseless populations, aid and assist patients, Oregonians with addictions, children, farmers and farming communities, urban and rural communities, public safety and justice systems, and workers vicariously traumatized through the pandemic.

Portland State University's request is responsive to the challenges of our time, and we are happy to support them. We encourage you to support HB 2485 so that we reinvest in Oregon and support our students and communities.

Thank you,

Zakir Khan