



**TO: Rep. Rob Nosse, Chair
Rep. Christine Goodwin, Vice Chair
Rep. Travis Nelson, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health & Health Care**

**FR: Amanda Dalton
Oregon District Attorneys Association**

RE: HB 2544 – SUPPORT for Increasing Capacity for Placement for Those with Mental Health Concerns

March 13, 2023

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

The Oregon District Attorneys support House Bill 2544 because it provides a positive step towards addressing one of today's most pressing public safety issues.

Individuals who have criminal charges pending while they receive treatment at the Oregon State Hospital are being discharged at a rapid pace under Judge Mosman's September 1, 2022 order. With a shortage of secured residential treatment beds, these individuals have no options for receiving treatment in the community. If there are no community treatment option, these cases are often dismissed by the courts. In those instances, defendants with serious criminal charges and who are deemed to still need a hospital level of care to address their mental health disorders are discharged to the streets with little mental health treatment available to them.

At the same time, defendants who are in need of mental health services in order to restore them to fitness but are deemed good candidates to receive services in the community may not be able to secure a treatment bed. Again, their cases may be dismissed and these individuals left without treatment options.

House Bill 2544 will provided much needed funding to open more residential treatment beds. This investment is most critically needed for secured facilities serving those with the acute mental health needs and whose charges and behaviors reflect a serious public safety concern.

The ODAA urges your support of HB 2544.