



February 18, 2025

Good morning Chair, Vicechair and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Sonia Brauhn and I work at the Stabilization and Crisis Unit. I have worked for the State going on 24 years. I love having a career that helps others but far too often, we're put in unsafe situations which cause trauma and have long-lasting affects.

As someone who has experienced a traumatic event at the hands of a client we try to care for, the healing journey can be complex. SACU operates multiple homes for both youth and adults all over the I-5 corridor and at my original placement, I suffered from a traumatic injury that was so bad, I was moved to another house. I've had to do extensive therapy with a psychiatrist to try to alleviate my stress injury and I'm still on medication to deal with the symptoms of PTSD.

There are not enough resources to help the staff cope and recover from the mental anguish and trauma sustained as a state employee. More support is needed to help heal those who give so much of themselves to care for others. PTSD needs more recognition in Oregon. My trauma grew as navigating a difficult health system prevented me from healing sooner.

I applied for workers compensation because I knew my traumatic injuries stemmed from my workplace but I was denied. The process was tedious. It felt like an uphill battle to get SACU and workman's comp to recognize my diagnosis. There was a point that they even forced me to work with the client who threatened to stab me and caused my PTSD. That further delayed my healing. My psychiatrist had to write a letter to advocate for how wrong it was to continue to force me to work in an environment that would continue to trigger the PTSD.

By adding this group of workers to the presumption, we would be able to access resources for mental health care.

Thank you for considering this bill and we urge your support on this important matter.