



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 25, 2025

To: Chair [Rep. Zach Hudson](#), Vice Chairs [Rep. Lisa Fragala](#) and [Rep. Darin Harbick](#)
and members of the [House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development](#)

Re: [HB 3129](#) – Higher Ed Behavioral Health Workforce Expansion Fund – **Support**

HB 3129 is designed to help address the mental health provider workforce crisis in Oregon. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the bill because it is consistent with the US League’s positions on healthcare:

The League of Women Voters believes that every US resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes mental health care. As public health crises increasingly reveal, a health program should protect the health of its most vulnerable populations, urban and rural, in order to protect the health of everyone.

The 2024 [Mental Health in America report](#) ranks Oregon 47th in the nation in mental health care. This means that the state has a higher prevalence of mental illness and lower access to care than practically all other states. A major contributing factor to this low ranking is the provider workforce shortage.

The Expansion Fund will help address the workforce problem. The Fund will benefit behavioral health students at several levels of education, including the graduate level. A January [2025 report by the HB 2235 Workgroup](#) detailed the importance of advanced level mental health professionals in the system:

“The shortage of master’s-level and advanced behavioral health professionals is a major issue that limits access to care across Oregon. These highly trained professionals play a critical role in the system by developing individualized treatment plans that guide care for many clients, especially those with complex needs.” The report noted that the need for these professionals is projected to grow by 27.4% by 2032. Oregon needs more behavioral health professionals and the Fund can help develop them.

The League urges your support of HB 3129.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bentson".

Lisa Bentson
President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Aller".

Stephanie Aller
Behavioral Health Portfolio