



Oregon State
University

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Dear Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the Committee:

My name is David Rothwell, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3129, a crucial investment in Oregon's behavioral health workforce. As a social worker and professor, I have dedicated nearly two decades to working with society's most vulnerable, many experiencing behavioral health needs.

Why HB 3129 Is Critical

1. **Severe Workforce Shortages.** The demand for mental health services is at an all-time high, yet workforce shortages leave many Oregonians without care. HB 3129 will fund education and training pathways to develop a sustainable pipeline of behavioral health professionals.
2. **Strategic Workforce Development.** HB 3129 establishes a Behavioral Health Workforce Expansion Fund to oversee investments in education, training, and retention strategies. This ensures resources are directed where they will have the greatest impact, focusing on outcomes and actual results.
3. **Removing Barriers.** Many aspiring behavioral health professionals face financial burdens, a lack of internship opportunities, and unclear career pathways. HB 3129 creates a dedicated funding mechanism to support students, training programs, and supervised clinical experiences, ensuring more people can enter and remain in the field. Reducing barriers has proven to diversify the workforce and expand our reach to underserved communities.

At Oregon State University, my colleagues are working to expand training efforts for Oregon's next generation of behavioral health professionals. The College of Health is developing an innovative Master's in Human Development and Family Studies – Applied Mental Health Option, designed to prepare students for Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) certification and ensure they are workforce-ready upon graduation. This complements our College of Education's longstanding counseling program and our College of Liberal Arts's Applied Psychology training efforts. We recognize that education and training are only part of the solution—students need funding, mentorship, and clear career pathways to succeed. HB 3129 provides a critical mechanism to support programs like ours and expand opportunities for future mental health professionals across the state. With HB 3129, we can make real, lasting change. I strongly urge this committee to support and advance HB 3129.

Sincerely yours,

David W. Rothwell
Barbara E. Knudson Chair in Family Policy
Associate Professor