



WOMEN'S FOUNDATION of OREGON

Invest in Women. Invest in Oregon. Invest in Change.

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair and Members of the House Interim Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

The Women's Foundation of Oregon is dedicated to focusing the power of women's collective resources to improve the lives of women and girls throughout Oregon. We are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 2203, which mandates the Oregon Health Authority to conduct a comprehensive study on the safety of behavioral health workers.

Behavioral health workers, including therapists, counselors, social workers, and psychiatric nurses, play a vital role in providing essential mental health and substance abuse treatment services to our communities. Ensuring their safety is paramount, as it directly impacts the quality and continuity of care they can offer. By directing the Oregon Health Authority to study the safety of these professionals and report findings to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to health by September 15, 2026, HB 2203 takes a crucial step toward identifying and addressing potential risks faced by these workers.

This initiative aligns with our commitment to dismantling sexism, racism, and structural oppression through the movement of resources and ideas toward gender justice. Many behavioral health workers are women who often encounter unique challenges in their professional environments. A thorough examination of their safety will not only protect these workers but also enhance the overall effectiveness of behavioral health services in Oregon.

We commend the sponsors of HB 2203 for their foresight in addressing this critical issue and urge the committee to pass this bill. By doing so, we can ensure a safer working environment for behavioral health professionals, thereby strengthening the support system for individuals and families in need of mental health services across our state.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Libra Forde
Executive Director
Women's Foundation of Oregon