

My name is David Miller and I live in Bend and I am submitting my testimony in opposition to this bill.

I write to you as a dad and not as part of any organization. I'm 62 years old and, while not formally trained in adolescent mental health issues, I was forced to learn through my real-world experience once my daughter started to struggle with mental illness as a young teenager.

My wife and I have been married for 30 years, and we had our kids in 1997 and 2001. I wanted nothing more than to be a good dad.

Our journey through the mental health system began when our daughter was about 13 years old and started to struggle academically and socially in a variety of ways. I'm lucky enough to have a good job and so we were able to spend a lot of time and money on therapists and psychiatrists, which led to all types of medications and programs. She also attended two different schools during her first two years of high school, and both were disasters. Things were only getting worse. We felt her life was on the line.

Going into her junior year we were desperate and hired an expensive consultant to explore new options. Ultimately, (after a lot of drama I'll leave out for brevity's sake) our daughter wound up in an expensive "therapeutic boarding school" in Utah.

**That decision is the single biggest regret in my life – I would give anything to undue that decision. And that's why I'm here to oppose this bill.**

My daughter primarily is forever scarred as a result of how she was treated and what she saw there. We were desperate and wanted to believe in a "solution." We had the resources to explore and choose a "top" facility – and it was a disaster.

The fact is that, even at the (so-called) best facilities there are structural problems that make it virtually impossible for them to provide safe and effective care. It is a recipe for disaster to place a group of mentally ill teens – all with different issues (as these things are notoriously hard to diagnose) – into a home 24/7 for months or years with young staff who are constantly turning over. Sprinkle it with a profit motive and it is virtually unavoidable. You won't have occasional abuse and trauma – it will be a regular part of these kids' lives – and follow them forever.

Sending kids to out of state residential facilities will harm many more children than it helps – if it even helps one. Even if you think this is a solution – trust me, it is not.

I'd like to give everyone involved in the debate over this bill the benefit of the doubt in that we're all trying to do right by kids who are struggling with mental illness. That said, it would be naive not to recognize that all of the money is on the side of passing this bill. All the for-

profit interests are aligned on one side and there are no dollars available to oppose this – just traumatized kids and their families. Why? Because the people who are going to get hurt if you make a mistake with this bill are mentally ill kids and they have no lobbying dollars or trade association.

So please, when you are ready to vote on this bill, I implore you to vote no – the vague and malleable rules about sending kids to out-of-state facilities should make this version of the bill unpassable.

Thank you for your time.