

Submitter: Meredith Ruff
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2467

Hello,

I know that I am not a resident of Oregon but our states tend toward each other. I am a person who has a lot of experience working with people who have been institutionalized. It might seem like institutionalizing someone is the only way to help them, but for those that we are most "concerned" about (frequent jail/hospital/rehab etc.) users, institutionalization doesn't really work. That's why there's a revolving door between psychiatric hospitals, jails, and the street. Institutionalization can be retraumatizing and just add to the issues that impact people's mental state in the first place. Institutionalizing people for long periods simply because their behavior is not in step with what is societally expected is more about the comfort of the public than the safety of person. And it is about comfort, not safety. Even if the person being brought in is "violent" (and most people experiencing mental illness are not) psychiatrists and psychologists cannot predict future violence with an accuracy of more than 50%. Do you think it's acceptable to continually institutionalize someone, take away their freedom, based on a coin flip?

Institutionalization is supposed to be difficult, not an answer to society's ills. You'll need to fund VOLUNTARY and FREE mental health care and housing for that.