



31 March 2025

House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

RE: House Bill 3792

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I serve as the Executive Director of the **Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency** in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk, and nine other counties across Oregon. Each year, we provide more than \$80 million in services and direct client assistance for housing, homelessness, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs to more than 60,000 Oregonians experiencing poverty. I also serve as the Vice President for Legislative Affairs at the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, sit on the Housing Committee of the Racial Justice Council, was a member of the House Bill 2100 Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities, and most recently Chaired the Legislature's Joint Task Force on Hospital Discharge.

Through these roles, I've seen first-hand how the current lack of clarity around civil commitment criteria contributes to the revolving door of untreated mental illness through our homeless and criminal justice systems. Too often, individuals are left to deteriorate because the threshold for intervention is ambiguous and narrowly interpreted. I have, to date, lost count of how many people have died outside from exposure and neglect. Many of these were deemed not a threat to themselves, yet they were dying day-by-day while the state did nothing to help them.

House Bill 2467 represents a vital step toward modernizing Oregon's civil commitment laws. By clearly defining key terms such as "dangerous to self", "dangerous to others", and "serious physical harm", this legislation gives courts and clinicians a more consistent and evidence-based framework for making critical decisions. It also outlines the relevant types of evidence courts may consider, aligning Oregon's statutes with real-world conditions and clinical best practices.

Many of the people we serve are unable to access or sustain stable housing due to untreated mental illness preventing them from meeting even basic needs. By providing earlier intervention points and clear criteria House Bill 2467 will help prevent the kind of physical and psychological deterioration that often leads to chronic homelessness or incarceration. However, we must pair these statutory changes with corresponding investments in treatment and housing. Changes in laws alone will not be sufficient, Oregon must expand availability of supportive housing, licensed residential treatment facilities and intensive outpatient services to ensure people have a path forward and ongoing support once stabilized.

House Bill 2467 is a necessary and balanced reform that can help bridge the gap between the behavioral health system and housing stability. It will empower frontline systems across Oregon to intervene earlier, more safely, and more effectively, with better outcomes for individuals, families and communities. For all of these reasons, we urge your strong support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Jones
Executive Director