

**To:** Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
**From:** Andy Goebel, CEO, Sunstone Way  
**Date:** March 31, 2025  
**Subject:** Support for HB 2467

**Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan, and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Andy Goebel, and I am the CEO of Sunstone Way, a nonprofit that provides low-barrier shelter, supportive housing, and wraparound services for people experiencing homelessness in the Portland metro region. I am writing today in strong support of HB 2467.

This bill directly impacts the work we do every day. At Sunstone Way, we serve hundreds of individuals who are unsheltered and living with untreated mental illness, addiction, or both. Many of these individuals are in obvious and escalating distress—isolated, vulnerable, and often unable to care for themselves safely. Yet under current Oregon law, unless they meet a vague and inconsistently interpreted threshold of being a “danger to self or others,” they cannot be evaluated for civil commitment, even when they are clearly at risk.

This leaves our staff and shelter operators trying to support people in crisis without the tools to get them the clinical care they urgently need. It leaves people suffering on the streets, disconnected from services, deteriorating in health, and increasingly isolated until a traumatic incident or a criminal charge forces an emergency response.

**HB 2467 Creates the Clarity We Need:** HB 2467 brings urgently needed clarity to Oregon’s commitment laws. It replaces subjective, outdated language with clear definitions of “serious physical harm” and “risk in the near future,” allowing clinicians and courts to make more consistent and informed decisions. This means that individuals in psychiatric distress can be connected to treatment before they end up hospitalized, incarcerated, or dead.

In the houseless services field, that clarity is transformative. It allows shelter teams to work in closer partnership with mental health providers, offering earlier intervention and greater stability for people who otherwise cycle through emergency rooms, jails, and shelters without ever getting lasting help.

**This Bill Supports Housing Stability:** Stable shelter is the first step, but long-term housing success depends on access to behavioral health care. We often see people lose their housing—not due to unwillingness or noncompliance—but because untreated symptoms of mental illness go unaddressed. HB 2467 ensures we can intervene at the right time, with the right services, so that people aren’t forced to fail in shelter or housing before receiving care.

**HB 2467 Reduces the Strain on Emergency Systems:** When commitment standards are vague, law enforcement becomes the default mental health responder. At Sunstone Way, we frequently coordinate with police not because someone has committed a crime, but because they are in crisis and no other help is available. This bill shifts that burden to where it belongs—on trained mental health professionals equipped to help.

**Protecting Rights, Providing Compassionate Care:** We recognize Oregon’s painful history with overbroad civil commitment practices, and we support reforms that uphold civil liberties. HB 2467 strikes that balance. It offers strong legal safeguards while still enabling timely intervention for those in crisis—especially people in the houseless community who are often least able to advocate for themselves.

**We Also Need Investments in Care:** Finally, while HB 2467 is critical, it must be paired with expanded behavioral health capacity—especially licensed residential treatment options. Legal clarity is essential, but it must be matched by real places for people to go when they need care.

At Sunstone Way, we see every day how current commitment laws fall short. HB 2467 is a thoughtful, necessary step that will allow us to do our jobs more effectively, keep our communities safer, and ensure people experiencing houselessness get the treatment and dignity they deserve. I urge your full support.

Sincerely,

Andy Goebel  
Chief Executive Officer, Sunstone Way  
Portland, Oregon