



Good afternoon Co-Campos and Valderrama, members of the committee on the subcommittee on Human Services;

My name is Erika Astorga and I am DSCS at the Stabilization and Crisis Unit. I've been doing this line of work for 2 years. The reason why I decided to do this line of work was I already had some form of background of doing this line of work and I wanted to do something that actually impacts the lives of others.

I write today in opposition to the proposed budget for the Oregon Department of Human Services as presented with a decrease in funding and the transition from the state operated homes to private providers in the second year of the biennium.

Having SACU at 100% is crucial to stay open. I have to ask, where would we put these individuals when they are slowly building skills to live day-to-day lives? They can be a danger to themselves and others, how is that safe for the public? If SACU closes, where are we going to put the individuals? They need SACU so they can build the skills to live the best life they can. Staff do know the needs of the individuals we support and have the training to help deescalate a crisis when it occurs. It also teaches the individuals how to work with different types of people when they reach their end goal.

The right sizing for SACU needs to be at 100%. We need to keep the staff and the individuals safe when a crisis occurs. **I just want to know where is the empathy towards these people when they need help?** Where is the concern of the public when these individuals have a crisis in public and harm someone? And it's a matter of when not if. Cutting SACU isn't going to help anything besides add stress and inconvenience everyone who is part of the community. We are already struggling with housing with the homeless and everyone struggling to pay for their homes, are we going to add more strain to that for the sake of money?

SACU staff are better trained to handle these crisis vs the community, SACU has a lower turnover rate which also provides some form of stability to the individuals we support. Money comes and goes but lives aren't temporary.

We urge this committee to carefully consider the impacts this has on the individuals and the safety of the public, if it decides to close SACU. **You're risking the well being of the individuals and the public just to save money.** As a direct care worker, this budget cut is dangerous and reckless. The lack of communication of all parties needs to be improved.

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