



March 29, 2025

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

My name is Heather Clausen, and I am a DSCS at the Stabilization and Crisis Unit. I've been at SACU for 12 years and I joined this field because I believe in treating every individual with the dignity, respect, and attention I would want for my own family member if they had to live in a group home. **This work is deeply personal to me, as I know how critical it is for individuals in crisis to have a safe, stable environment with caregivers who genuinely care about their well-being.**

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 state operated homes to private providers in the second year of the biennium. SACU runs crisis homes, and private providers run long-term homes. Oregon cannot afford to lose any crisis beds.

SACU staff are trained at a significantly greater level than staff in community placements, with extensive preparation to manage the unique challenges of individuals with high acuity and crisis needs. **This includes specialized training in behavior management, crisis intervention, and medical care that community staff often lack.** Additionally, SACU staff have lower turnover rates compared to community placements, which means individuals receive consistent care from experienced providers who truly know and understand their needs. High staff turnover in community placements can cause disruptions, stress, and regression for individuals who rely on stability. SACU's high level of training and consistency is vital to ensuring these individuals thrive and remain safe.

We urge this committee to carefully consider the impacts this has on the individuals served. Any funding cuts without a clear plan about how individuals will get served in other settings puts their lives at risk. As a direct care worker, this proposed budget is reckless and has lacked clear communication to all parties involved.

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