

Submitter: Sarah Kester
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB581

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Kester, and I am a resident of Keizer, Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 581, which would establish the Psychology Provider Incentive Program under the Oregon Health Authority.

As someone who has seen firsthand the growing need for accessible, culturally competent mental health care in our communities, I believe this bill represents an important and timely investment. Mental health challenges have only increased in recent years, and yet we continue to face a shortage of providers—particularly those who are trained in cultural competency and equipped to serve diverse populations.

SB 581 offers a thoughtful approach to this crisis by creating incentives for psychology students to pursue specialized training, while also providing loan repayment support to licensed psychologists who are ready to serve where they are most needed. This kind of forward-thinking legislation not only helps address workforce shortages, but also ensures that care is more inclusive and responsive to the real needs of Oregonians.

Furthermore, by establishing the Psychology Provider Incentive Fund and encouraging public employers to prioritize hiring qualified psychologists, Oregon would be taking critical steps toward strengthening our behavioral health infrastructure for the long term.

I urge you to support SB 581 and help create a more equitable, sustainable, and compassionate mental health system for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,
Sarah Kester
Keizer, Oregon