

April 3, 2025

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

My name is Odalis Aguilar Aguilar and I am a political coordinator at Oregon AFSCME. Our union represents over 39,000 workers across the state in both public and private sectors and we believe in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families. Oregon AFSCME represents the direct care support workers at the Stabilization and Crisis Unit who provide 1:1 care to the clients residing in the SACU's across the state.

When you talk to our members, you can quickly see how passionate they are about the work they do and the individuals they support. They share with us how fulfilling their roles are and know that it's a calling for them to be in this line of work. During a time where the state is experiencing a shortage of behavioral health services and a thin workforce who has years of specialized training, Oregon AFSCME firmly believes that it is unacceptable to attempt to make reductions to a program that is supposed to provide care and support to those who have nowhere else to go.

Our organization is in strong opposition to the proposed budget recommendations by the Oregon Department of Human Services to the SACU program. We continue to have concerns about the way the department and management of the program are making decisions regarding the future of SACU. In December of 2024, the agency stated that they were directed to create a, "plan for a plan" and that, "these conversations really are to get us into a room and begin the conversation about what do we want SACU to look like.. and can we get there with the budget reduction exercise."

**Since December, the only conversations taking place were very few isolated conversations that were 1:1 with the consultant group that the agency hired to facilitate and create a report that cost over a quarter of a million dollars. There was no room where all stakeholders were all together** to discuss the future of SACU and what right sizing SACU would look like. We are not opposed to the idea of right-sizing SACU back to its intended purpose, the workforce is ready to get to work and ensure that individuals who need a place in SACU have one. If adopted, this proposal would put the lives at risk of those individuals who have no other place to go and would reassign a workforce that is extremely talented.

At this moment in time, when we are 3 months away from Sine Die, **we firmly believe that the right next step is maintaining SACU funding at the current service level with no cuts to the program** while the department engages in further thoughtful, genuine, and close collaboration so that we are able to reach SACU's goals of being a short term crisis program. We also need assurances that adequate community placements will be available for individuals and there will be concrete employment opportunities created for the highly skilled staff currently working in SACUs.

**The proposed budget is reckless, negligent, harmful and will be more costly in the end. If the proposal is adopted, this body is putting trust in an agency that has consistently eroded trust between its own workforce, the individuals itself, the guardians of those individuals and the general public.**

We urge you to **keep funding levels at current CSL for the SACU program and hold the agency accountable to ensure next steps are truly transparent to the public, workforce, individuals and their guardians.**

This conversation is highly complex and understand that there are multiple pieces to ensure that the IDD community has the services they need to live healthy lives. **AFSCME is strongly supportive of increased investment into the I/DD case management system.** Throughout the state, AFSCME also represents many of the workers at CDDPs, and over the last several biennia, these programs have received what is roughly considered 86% of full funding. This has led to high turnover for many of our unionized staff, all while the complexity of the work continues to increase. **We are partnering this session with the CDDPs to advocate that these programs be fully funded for the 2025-2027 biennium.** Investment above CSL would draw down significant federal match, and would allow our workers to best ensure the health and safety of those we serve.

Thank you for your consideration.