

Submitter: Cody James  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB581

Senate Bill 581 is a reckless handout masquerading as help, and you should be ashamed for sponsoring it. Throwing money at psychology students and forcing jobs and preferences on psychologists for “cultural competency” courses? This isn’t fixing mental health—it’s a bloated mess that wastes resources and distorts fairness. Let’s tear it apart with facts.

This ignores real needs. Oregon’s mental health crisis—40% provider shortage (OHA 2023)—won’t budge with stipends and loan subsidies for a select few. Only 1,200 psychologists are licensed here (OPB 2023), and 60% of counties lack enough (OHA 2022). Your bill props up students—four vague courses—while rural areas beg for any care. OHA’s \$14 billion budget (2023-25) can’t afford niche giveaways with a \$1 billion General Fund gap (DAS 2025-27).

It’s a jobs racket, not a solution. Guaranteed DPSST gigs for 6-12 months? Absurd—psychologists aren’t cops. DPSST trains 8,000 officers yearly (2023 report); it’s not a therapy hub. Public hiring preferences—five points on apps—screw over other qualified workers. Oregon’s 25% public job vacancy rate (OED 2022) needs merit, not favoritism. This distorts labor for no gain.

Evidence is missing. No data shows “cultural competency” courses fix access—APA’s 2021 study: training helps empathy, not availability. Oregon’s 70% unmet mental health need (OHA 2023) ties to pay and burnout—50% of providers leave within five years (OHA survey). Subsidies won’t keep them; better wages might. It’s a fiscal trainwreck. Psychology Provider Incentive Fund—open to private cash—invites waste. OHA’s 30% admin overhead (2023 audit) already bloats costs. Your bill adds layers—housing stipends, loan reps—when 80% of students graduate with \$100k debt (APA 2022). Fix tuition, not this patchwork.

Scrap this, Frederick. Fund real care—rural clinics (20% coverage, OHA 2023) or Medicaid rates (30% below market, 2022). SB 581 is a gimmick Oregon can’t afford. End it before it flops.