

**Emerson Levy**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
House District 53



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

May 14, 2025

Co-Chairs Prozanski and Kropf, Co-Vice Chair Mannix, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today in support of HB 3631, which would implement the Thriving Youth: Prevention & Intervention Initiative. This pilot program will provide substance use prevention education and increased access to specialized mental and behavioral health services to 20 counties in Oregon, with focus on our most underserved and remote communities.

In my district, which includes much of central Oregon, there is a desert of behavioral health resources. The region lacks the education and services to help kids who are struggling with substance misuse and mental health issues. As a result, parents and guardians are forced to drive 3+ hours through the Cascades when their child is experiencing an intense mental crisis or spend prolonged time in the Emergency Department. That is why it is no coincidence that central Oregon also has some of the highest rates of youth homelessness in the country. Early intervention opportunities allow kids to access the support they need and help them become thriving members of their communities.

Oregon ranks 46th nationally for adults with substance abuse disorders who required but did not receive treatment. In fact, our state's behavioral crisis response systems do not meet national guidelines and best practices, despite the increasing need to address substance misuse and mental health. I strongly believe that investing in upstream solutions that focus on whole-child support and trauma-informed care will help prevent adult substance use disorders.

This is an opportunity to serve thousands of youth in rural and low-income communities, and give them access to critical services they deserve. I urge the committee to pass HB 3631 and support Oregon's commitment to investing in our future generation.

Thank you.

Emerson Levy  
State Representative, House District 53