

County Commissioners
Danielle Bethell, Chair
Colm Willis
Kevin Cameron



Chief Administrative
Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

June 16, 2025

Co-Chair Senator Floyd Prozanski
Co-Chair Representative Jason Kropf
Co-Vice Chair Representative Kevin Mannix
Members of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response

Opposition to House Bill 2005

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

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our strong opposition to House Bill 2005 as currently drafted.

Over the past several years, counties across Oregon have devoted significant time, expertise, and real-world experience to help the Legislature craft meaningful reforms to Oregon's mental health system, particularly through civil commitment reform (HB 2467) and efforts to address aid and assist challenges. Marion County has been at the forefront of this work, contributing constructive, solution-oriented proposals developed alongside law enforcement, clinicians, district attorneys, behavioral health experts and individuals with lived experience.

We are disheartened to see this work ignored in favor of a bill that attempts to combine two fundamentally different systems, civil commitment and aid and assist, into a single framework for the sake of expediency. These systems serve different purposes, involve different populations, and require different operational approaches. Merging them under the pressure of a federal contempt ruling not only undermines the integrity of both efforts, it also endangers the lives of vulnerable individuals and the safety of our communities.

Let us be clear: passing legislation simply because the State of Oregon was held in contempt by a federal court for failing to provide timely mental health treatment is not responsible governance. It is reactive policymaking that prioritizes headlines and reputational damage control over public safety and long-term system effectiveness. The reality is this: the federal court ruling is a symptom of systemic failure, not a justification to push through a broken bill.

If legislators truly want to fix what's wrong with Oregon's behavioral health system, they should begin by listening to the counties, the ones tasked with implementation. They should support House Bill 2467, which was built from the ground up with stakeholder input and real-world practicality in mind. They should provide statutory protections for law enforcement officers asked to transport individuals in crisis. They should allow counties the time needed to conduct

thorough mental health investigations. And they should ensure funding and infrastructure are in place before adding new mandates.

Our neighbors deserve better than a rushed and incomplete bill driven by political pressure and litigation. They deserve thoughtful, implementable solutions that address the root causes of Oregon's mental health crisis, not a patchwork bill that tries to do too much, too fast, and risks doing more harm than good.




The stabbing at the Union Gospel Mission in our own community earlier this month was a tragic and preventable example of what happens when the system fails. The man responsible has a decades-long history of mental illness, multiple documented police interactions, and prior commitment to the State Hospital. Yet there was no legal or treatment pathway to intervene before twelve innocent people were stabbed.

That failure should have spurred a commitment to thoughtful reform, not a rush to check a political box.

House Bill 2005, as drafted, does not reflect the years of collaboration, the expertise of counties, or the urgency of the crisis. We urge the Committee to reject HB 2005 in its current form and instead support the standalone passage of HB 2467 and the targeted funding and operational reforms it contains.

We stand ready to work with you to build solutions that prioritize people over politics and restore faith in Oregon's behavioral health system.

Sincerely,

		
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Danielle Bethell	Colm Willis	Kevin Cameron
Chair	Commissioner	Commissioner