

## **In support of HB 2971**

For the past 30 years I have devoted my career to Centers for Independent Living (CILs). I am proud to be one of the founders of Lane Independent Living Alliance. CIL's are the political and social centers of the disability community and the primary advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. As staff members and volunteers, all of whom experience disabilities, we serve as mentors and role models for people with disabilities who are struggling to be integrated into the larger community.

At CILs we believe that ALL people with disabilities, physical, psychiatric, developmental, or cognitive deserve the same civil rights, freedoms, and responsibilities as nondisabled citizens. Furthermore, Centers for Independent Living have demonstrated that, when given the opportunity, most people with disabilities are motivated to improve their ability to live independently and be productive. With adequate funding, we could empower many more. Our model is not only morally right but also fiscally responsible. Providing support for living independently results in significant cost savings for Oregon. Compare the costs of a long term care facility to teaching consumers to manage necessary care giving services in their own homes. Providing individuals with the skills to go to work as opposed to paying benefits such as Medicaid and SSI could greatly reduce the financial burden to the state of Oregon.

We work closely with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in Lane and Marion Counties to help people with disabilities gain and maintain employment. LILA's Disability Navigators are stationed at the Lane Workforce Network to help consumers with disabilities access the Workforce services. LILA's Peer Support Club enables people with psychiatric disabilities to remain in the community and lessens the need for expensive hospitalization and long term residential care.

LILA is a shining example of how, with the commitment and ability of people with disabilities, we have been able to use a very small amount of funding to impact people with disabilities and improve community inclusion in Lane County as well as other parts of Oregon.

Lynne Braverman McKinney M.S.  
Independent Living Skills Instructor  
Lane Independent Living Alliance