



DIANE ROSENBAUM
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

To: Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services
From: Senator Diane Rosenbaum
Date: Monday, February 10, 2014
RE: Testimony in Support of SB 1542: Home Care Choice

Chair Monnes Anderson, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 1542, which makes quality in-home care more affordable for Oregon seniors and people with disabilities by enabling all Oregonians to choose qualified caregivers through the existing Oregon Home Care Commission Registry and Referral System.

For many seniors, and also for Oregonians with disabilities, access to help with daily household tasks—like bathing and preparing meals—can mean the difference between staying at home and moving into a facility. Currently, only individuals whose care is provided by Medicaid may hire caregivers through the registry. For others there are only two options available to hire home care workers: hiring a caregiver through an agency, or advertising and hiring on their own. This bill provides a third option that addresses the critical gap in consumer choice of the current system. The Oregon Home Care Commission Registry and Referral System is already working well and has been identified as a national best practice by the New York Times and AARP in helping seniors and people with disabilities remain at home. This bill expands access to a successful system to Oregonians at all income levels.

SB 1542 will enable Oregonians at all income levels to search the state registry and hire a trained, background-checked caregiver who best meets their needs. This will mean greater independence, safety and peace-of-mind for aging Oregonians and people with disabilities. Since the state is only recouping administrative costs rather than trying to make a profit, the costs to consumers will be lower, enabling more Oregonians to afford home care. By providing the administrative side of the employment relationship through the Commission, this bill eliminates the worry of hiring on the “grey market.”

This bill is particularly important for rural areas of the state, where it is currently difficult for individuals to find caregivers. The Oregon Home Care Commission Registry and Referral system includes qualified caregivers in all 36 counties, enhancing access to home care throughout the state.

The bottom line is that this bill will help Oregon seniors and those with disabilities have access to quality in-home care. The -1 Amendment before you comes from work with the Home Care Commission and stakeholders. Along with many technical changes, it contains provisions that provide transparent implementation and ensure that home care recipients and workers discuss and agree on the scope of home care services. I urge the Committee to send SB 1542 with the -1 amendment to Ways and Means with a “Do Pass” recommendation.

Thank you,

Diane Rosenbaum

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