

Chair Denbrow and members of the Committee:

Thank you for your time today. My name is Teri Marsh, I am the Employment Services Director for Shangri-La. As you know, Shangri-La employs people with disabilities in a number of different businesses, some under QRF contracts and some with private contracts. We also support people in actively pursuing, obtaining and retaining competitive integrated employment.

Over the years Shangri-La has participated in working closely with Vocational Rehabilitation as well as our counties and state in working towards optimum employment opportunities for people with disabilities. We had designed our businesses as training opportunities, never really designed for long term employment. Although many of the people we support in these businesses have worked at the same job for many years. There have also been people who have gone on to competitive integrated employment based on the training they received – at the pace they needed the training.

Shangri-La also holds a 14c Certificate which allows us to pay people a commensurate wage (based on productivity). This is highly regulated by the Department of Labor. This not only allows us to employ people who otherwise may not have the opportunity to try something that they are interested in but not sure if they really are interested as well as continue to employ people who have worked at their jobs for a long time and truly do not want to work anywhere else.

There are currently many forces at work to promote competitive integrated employment. Oregon's Employment First Policy, the Governor's Executive Order and the recent changes in service payments to incentivize individualized, competitive employment. We support these changes and the movement and as mentioned previously are actively participating in offering services for individualized employment opportunities. In this time of change the capacity within the State to provide the individualized services required is not here. Many providers like Shangri-La are rapidly gearing up and participating in training and capacity building opportunities. But we are not all there yet.

Please consider the impact of this bill on current employees of QRFs. It is important that people have choices and are not left behind in our hurry to make sure that everyone makes minimum or prevailing wage.