

April 13, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees

From: Joye Willman, Homecare Worker

Re: Support of SB 610 and HB 2009

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

I could talk all day about the important work I do to support my consumers ability to live independently, but I want to focus instead on the impact that low wages have on consumers. I work with a consumer that I have worked with for 21 years, following him through different state programs. I have worked through the state, through support service brokerages and now through the comprehensive 300 service program through a private agency. When I started working for private agency I had to take a \$3/hr pay cut. I did it because I'm dedicated to this person and giving him the best life possible.

He could not speak here today, but asked me to express to you the difficulty that he goes through every time one of his workers leaves due to low wages. His name is Laddie and some of you may know him. He asked me to share why he supports a living wage for ALL Oregonians and for his care providers. He said:

"My staff has not had a COLA for 5 or 6 years and it is increasingly difficult to have to keep training new people in how to best care for me. The high turnover is very stressful and frustrating. People need to be able to cover their rent, food, utilities, and still have gas, car, and insurance to get to work. Please give all Oregonians who can work a salary that they can live on."

Low wages are not only unfair to Homecare workers, they are unfair to people who need Homecare or support services because they cause high turnover. Imagine having someone new come in to support you and help with your most personal needs and taking time to train that person, only to have them leave because of low wages, and starting all over again. People who need Homecare or support services deserve better and we need a \$15 minimum wage to retain quality care providers.

Sincerely,

Joye Willman