

3/28/2017
SB 5526

Co Chairs Senator Steiner Hayward and representative Rayfield, and members of the committee

For the record my name is Brenda Talbott, my address is 33850 ne chamberlain rd, corbett, OR. I am the single mother of a 13 year old named Virginia, who was born with a severe seizure disorder. I am grateful to state that she is receiving case management services and support from Multnomah county community developmental disability program.

We have been blessed with a case manager named Sara, who without her, we would have been lost in the red tape and endless legal speak paperwork when applying for help. I cannot tell you how many times I have emailed texted and called her needing assistance with one form or another. My daughter would not be getting any help if it weren't for Sara, as I'd not have filled something out correctly, or submitted a form to the right place or checked the appropriate box. The other amazing thing about her, is I would never have even known certain things were available to my daughter if it weren't for her knowledge. For example, my daughter has to wear pullups. The cost on a weekly basis was a struggle, Sara let me know Virginia was eligible to receive free pullups and they could be delivered to our home. I cried. I had no idea. I wouldn't have to worry about her at school or in public wetting herself because I couldn't afford pullups that week anymore. And just recently I found out Virginia is eligible for a behavioral specialist to come out to our home and help her cope with "big feelings" as we call them. You see, she is non verbal, but understands everything you tell her. Imagine if you will being trapped in your own mind and not being able to tell people you are scared, worried, hurting, you don't have the ability to ask complex questions like Why is this happening to me, why can't I stay at a friends house. Plus she's a teenage girl, with all the same teenage anxst as any other teenage girl. I cannot tell you how excited I was to hear there was help for her, to know someone out there can help us cope and get her through this in one piece. These are just two examples, of many. And its because of our case manager, Sara.

For the first time in my life, I am terrified about what the future holds for my daughter. Put the shoe on the other foot, imagine your own children and grandchidrens well being hanging in the balance. Because this is truly what is at stake. My childs and others who are the most vulnerable of us all. To cut funding to remove that one person who can help us parents navigate the confusing, and frustrating governmental mumbo jumbo to find peace and aid for our babies is unconscionable. Please, they are not a bottom line, they are not a dollar sign, these are children who need help, in any way shape or form. I ask you, I beg you to please do not reduce the funding in case management. We would be lost.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. It has been an honor to speak on my daughters behalf, I would be happy to answer any questions.