



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

Aging and People with Disabilities

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Chair Keny-Guyer
Vice-Chair Sanchez
Vice-Chair Olson
Members of the Committee
House Committee on Human Services and Housing



Re: HB 3370

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening on HB 3370. While the department is neutral on this bill, I wanted to provide the history and context surrounding the work that led up to this bill. In 2014, the Department funded a project in Portland that coordinated housing and services for older adults and people with disabilities.

This is an innovative approach that is being adopted nationally, to ensure that a person's needs are fully met – not just health needs, but their long term care and housing as well. Concerns were raised about this approach by various entities in Oregon, specifically around consumer choice, rights, and oversight.

A formal taskforce was formed and staffed by the department. Out of that taskforce recommendations were made in the form of a report. The report has been loaded to OLIS for your convenience.

The taskforce didn't reach agreement on whether or not legislation was required. However, the taskforce agreed upon a definition of housing with services that encompassed the following items:

- Types of settings in which services are provided;
- Types of services provided in the settings;
- Service coordination;
- A process for registration; and
- Oversight role for the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman

The taskforce also strongly recommended that any of the recommendations not move forward unless there is adequate funding in place to support legislative changes.

As I understand HB 3370, it would require entities that meet the definition, to register with the department. This could be beneficial over time in understanding where older adults and people with disabilities are being served outside of licensed settings and to ensure that appropriate protections are in place for vulnerable populations.

"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"

There has been phenomenal growth in the independent living, housing with services, senior living, etc. industries and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. These are entities that have some of the same concepts brought forth when assisted living was first created, but are not subject to the same type of oversight.

Over time, with increasing numbers of older adults and the need and desire to serve people in community based care settings, we know that the needs of people in assisted living and other models of community based care, now often mirror those living in nursing facilities. There is a pattern in long term care where we collectively create new models, with little to no regulation. Over time, in some but not all cases, due to the vulnerability of the population targeted to be served, safety and quality issues arise.

The department is mindful of the need to innovate and meet an aging population's needs and to continue to encourage aging-in-place. We need to prop up and commend the business that are doing an excellent job serving older adults and people with disabilities and not get in their way. However, we must also keep vulnerable people safe. This is a balance that is sometimes hard to achieve, but I am confident we can rise to the challenge.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Ashley Carson Cottingham, Director
Aging and People with Disabilities Program
Department of Human Services