



April 26, 2017

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Joanne Fuhrman

RE: Support for SB 834

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Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Coalition (IDD Coalition) is a group of approximately 30 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equality and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families.

Oregon has long recognized that it is strongest when people with IDD live and work in their communities. The Coalition has worked extensively with DHS on implementing the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) rules. We see HCBS as an opportunity to walk our values and create services that bring people with IDD and communities together. Oregon is fortunate to have a service system built on these value and partners that share them including agency providers, families and advocates. We believe our system respects the rights of people using supports and we support this bill because we acknowledge no system can be perfect and there should always be safeguards for people supported.

Human rights commissions existed when we were closing Fairview. I was a member of the committee and worked alongside families to move people out of Fairview. This committee reviewed difficult issues when someone's rights were impacted during the move or when a person was already living in the community. Ultimately, however, our work made sure that people with IDD had their rights honored the same as any other community member.

I am the Co-Director of Partnerships in Community Living. We provide services to people with IDD. Like most of Oregon's agency providers, we take the dignity and rights of the people we support seriously. We welcome a Human Rights Commission to partner with us to help us honor the commitment.



Helping people live full self directed lives can be complicated, especially when this involves supporting people in decisions that involve real or perceived risks. For example, a woman supported by PCL lived in her own home for many years. As her health started to fail she started to experience some issues with swallowing that resulted in significant risk of choking and aspiration.

This woman debated with her team about the best way to keep her safe when she did not have support staff. Some members of her team wanted her to move and live with other people where 24 hour staff support was available. She strongly disagreed. She did not want to leave her home or have staff with her 24 hours a day.

She ultimately decided to plan her meals and snacks for when she had staff available for support. Her team debated for months, but finally agreed to this safety plan. In the meantime, she had to temporarily move to a situation where she could have 24 hour support.

This was a complicated situation. During these months, she felt like her opinion did not count and that her rights were being violated. Certain professionals on her team wanted her to move because they felt they were doing their job to make sure she was healthy and safe. Other members of her team believed they were doing their job to advocate for her to live where she wanted with a different meal plan. A Human Rights Committee to help provide guidance in cases like this could be very helpful for all involved.