

Penny Vansanten  
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HB 2830

My name is Penny Vansanten and I am a care provider in Keizer, Oregon. I want to start by thanking Senator Mark Hass and Speaker Tina Kotek for the work you have done on this committee. I am here today with my sister Thelma and my son Jake who are both disabled. I am here to tell you their story.

Back in the 90s, my sister was a resident at Fairview, which was the state-run facility for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. When Fairview closed in 2000, we moved her into a group home. Both of those environments were problematic for Thelma. In the group home, there was 500% turnover XX years. What that means is the caregivers were always new, always training, and never experienced in how to take care of my sister. In other words, the quality of care that she received was very low.

In these institutions, Thelma had very little choice in how her day was arranged. She didn't have the freedom to plan her own schedule and she didn't get the individual attention that she needs.

About 10 years ago we moved Thelma into our home, and we have several in-home care providers who support her. With this arrangement, her life has improved dramatically. The quality and consistency of the care she receives is so much better than it was in the group home.

In the 10 years we have been doing this, we have had 0 percent turnover. The homecare workers we employ are paid well – their current wage is \$14.50 per hour. They are able to stay in their jobs, and that has means Thelma receives the consistent, high-quality care that she needs to lead a healthy and full life.

My son Jake will never live in a group home or institution. After seeing how much better in-home care is, I will do whatever it takes to make sure he is supported in that kind of setting.

But with DHS facing massive budget cuts as a result of our current deficit, I am scared to death that the homecare program will be cut, at a time we should be investing more. My family – and thousands of other families around the state – would be thrown into disarray if we lost the services that my sister and son rely on.

That's the price we would pay for not asking corporations to pay their fair share.

I am here today to ask you to keep us and the thousands of families who support people with disabilities in mind when you are working on this revenue package because the status quo won't be enough. My family can't wait any longer. We need you to find a solution now.