



6/27/17

Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair Rayfield, members of the committee, thank you for letting me speak to HB 2684 and the -3 three amendment. For the record, my name is Kyndall Mason, I am a political and policy strategist for SEIU Local 503.

Earlier in session, SEIU released a report called Broken Promises, which was shared with this committee some time ago. This report details the need for more oversight, accountability and transparency within the I/DD system, specifically in DD group homes. HB 2684 was drafted with the intention of addressing many of the issues of abuse, neglect and lack of transparency that we see in the system.

The original language of the bill had 3 major components. It included a higher level of transparency, requesting annual audits and staffing reports that mirror what we currently see in the nursing home industry. The bill also included enhanced enforcement which called for annual inspections, mandatory minimum fines and enhanced whistleblower protections for workers. The third component called for a minimum wage of no less than \$15 an hour for direct support professionals.

Through the hearing process in the house human services committee we were asked to participate in a workgroup to draft amendments, and address the high cost of implementing the bill. We joined DHS and Oregon Resource Alliance, and Community Provider Association of Oregon, two associations who represent provider organizations. After just over a month of regular meetings, we feel like we have reached an acceptable compromise, and consensus, on the bill, while also reducing the cost of implementation drastically. We want to thank Rep. Piluso and Rep. Hack who helped convene and participate in the workgroup as well.

HB 2684 -3 has a variety of critical components that will increase transparency and supports for workers..

- It requires that providers submit annual staffing surveys through a nationally recognized tool so that DHS and the legislature can have a clearer picture of the staffing crisis in the sector.
- It increases licensing fees from \$30 to \$50 and the funds will be used to purchase 10,000 direct support professional training certificates so that we can ensure that DSPs have access to the training they need to be successful at their jobs, and to make sure consumers of services are receiving a high quality of supports.
- It puts into statute language that was in a budget note last session around wages, that will ensure that when there is a rate increase for DD group homes, that there will be a corresponding wage and/or health care benefits increase for workers.
- The enforcement components of the bill has been rolled into a workgroup that has already convened within ODDS and the focus of that group will include defining substantiated abuse levels and implementing mandatory minimum fines for said abuse.

This bill is a step in the right direction, and considering the current budget climate, it was imperative that we figure out a way to reduce the cost of implementing the bill. The -3 version of this bill is reflective of the hard work and dedication of both SEIU and the provider associations, and it's something we are quite proud of. The new fiscal is nominal and the change in the system, while subtle, sets Oregon in the right direction to continue to lead in long term care and supports.