



To: Chair Gelser and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee

From: Katie Rose, Chair, Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: Support for SB 1526 – Prohibiting court from considering parent’s disability in parental rights cases absent finding that behaviors or limitations related to the disability would endanger the child.

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD 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 is strongest when we support families to stay together. The DD Coalition believes that a person’s ability to parent should not be questioned solely because they have a disability.

We agree with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 that “Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, to exert control and choice over their own lives, and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of United States society” 42 USC 15001(a).

Our members have many experiences with receiving calls from Child Protective Services asking questions about someone’s ability to parent simply because they have a disability. In these cases, abuse was not typically alleged. It was enough to start a parental fitness examination because the parents had a diagnosis of a disability. The lasting and traumatic impacts of these investigations still exist today in the lives of our fellow community members.

We are excited to see SB 1526 take a step at correcting this problem in Oregon law. After SB 1526 passes, we welcome an opportunity to join a workgroup to discuss this issue further.

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