



February 23, 2018

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Barreto and Bynum, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of OR, we respectfully request your support for Senate Bill 1534 A.

Although homecare and personal support workers provide one of the most important services to the citizens of Oregon that need it the most, they are often not provided with commensurate wages, benefits and other protections. Providing minimum training standards will not only serve to elevate the financial status of these workers, but critically – ensure that these important services are provided in as professional a manner as possible.

It is also the case that these workers disproportionately consist of women and members of communities of color and, as is often the case with genderized and racialized employment categories, their contributions are often minimized. Significant numbers live under the poverty line and rely on public assistance.¹ Increased training will serve to raise this bar.

The critical need for qualified and well trained homecare and personal support workers is demonstrated in the ever-increasing numbers of older citizens. Oregon's 65-and-older population grew by 18 percent between July 2010 and July 2014, and it is undeniably increasing at ever higher rates.² These citizens are our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, as well as those who are disabled or are not able to take care of their immediate personal needs.

These workers represent a linchpin in the appropriate provision of medical services. They may not be physicians or clinical nurse practitioners, but without these workers, many Oregonians would likely be institutionalized, homeless or entirely dependent on significant support from family members.

Sincerely,

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¹ The Atlantic, The Forgotten Providers, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/home-health-care-workers-wages/502016/

² <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>

