



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

February 18, 2019

TO: Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: Support for HB 2406

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is the Protection and Advocacy program for Oregon. DRO provides legal-based advocacy services to Oregonians with disabilities across the state. DRO supports HB 2406.

The problem that HB 2406 seeks to address is that ORS 656.033 contains the term “mental retardation” in a provision that includes in workers compensation coverage a group of school students who receive job training. This term is offensive to many Oregonians. The policy set forth in the statute can be achieved using other terminology.

HB 2406, as amended by the -1 amendments, will remove the offending terminology and replace it with the descriptor: “intellectual disabilities.”

The bill with the -1 amendments has been thoroughly discussed by all stakeholders and has been approved by the Workers’ Compensation Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC). Because the use of words and terminology changes over time, we urge this committee to bring this statute up to the standards of contemporary usage and avoid needless offense to many Oregon citizens.

Thank you for accepting this testimony in support of HB 2406.