

To: Senate Human Services
From: Alicia Temple, Oregon Law Center
Date: March 26, 2019
Re: SB 669

Chair Gelser and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I respectfully request your support for SB 669 to improve training for long-term care providers and provide employee protections.

OLC is a non-profit organization that provides free legal help to people struggling to make ends meet. Our mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. We advocate for our clients and for the services and programs that help them to overcome poverty, which includes access to health care services along the full spectrum of health needs. Quality long-term care is a vital part of the system of care provides access to low-income Oregonians and SB 669 is important both for the people who receive care and those who provide it.

SB 669 will establish universal training standards for all home care workers in Oregon while implementing accountability and enforcement levers for private agencies. Oregon Law Center supports creating uniform training opportunities regardless of the funding stream that pays the worker, because clients deserve quality care. The demand for long-term care will continue to increase in the coming years, and has already resulted in an influx of private home care agency licensing requests. These agencies range from small, individual providers to national chains and the vast differences among agencies means there is little consistency in the quality of training, administrative abilities and treatment of employees.

In addition to universal training standards, OLC supports better employment protections for long-term care workers across the health care system. Employees deserve a private right of action to provide protections from retaliation with a 2-year statute of limitations. This bill provides these important changes and will give workers the protections they need.

Individuals who are receiving long-term care are relying on their caregiver for trustworthy and knowledgeable care. They should not have to worry about the quality or consistency of their care simply because the entity that provides it isn't subject to the same training requirements as other places. SB 669 will establish universal training standards for all home care workers in Oregon while implementing accountability and enforcement levers for private agencies.