



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

Aging and People with Disabilities

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The Honorable Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
The Honorable Senator Dallas Heard, Vice-Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 1035. In Oregon there are approximately 460,000 unpaid family caregivers providing care valued at \$5.7 billion, according to the AARP Public Policy Institute. As our population of older adults and people with disabilities grows in Oregon, we need to continue to innovate to meet long-term care services and supports needs, as well as support the people who care for vulnerable populations in a meaningful way. Caregiving is one of the most impactful activities on the quality of life for Oregon's most vulnerable citizens and we need to develop more ways to support the people doing this work.

Often, older adults and people with disabilities do not want to apply for Medicaid long-term services and supports because they are slightly over the income limit [300% of Supplemental Security Income (SSI)] or they know that they will not be able to afford their monthly expenses if they come onto the full Medicaid long-term care program. This is stressful for the individual in need of services and places pressures on family caregivers. We need options to support the individuals struggling with these situations.

SB 1035 is a much-needed step in the right direction to better serve Oregonians with family caregivers through critical respite services – such as personal care, adult day programs, meal prep and other tasks. If Oregonians had access to this type of Medicaid-funded support, they would be able to remain in their homes and communities longer because they would have the type of long-term services and supports they need. Washington State has been using this same model in the past couple of years and found it to be successful in filling an important need.

"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"

Additionally, with this proposal, individuals who are slightly over the income limit would be able to receive a modest Medicaid benefit to help with respite supports for their unpaid family caregiver.

The Office of Aging and People with Disabilities at the Department of Human Services is supportive of this bill and urges its passage. It is squarely in alignment with our strategic vision and plan and we are excited to do the work of convening the stakeholder group and working with CMS thereafter to seek approval of this innovative program.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashley C. Cottingham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashley Carson Cottingham, Director
Aging & People with Disabilities
Oregon Department of Human Services