

Hi there,

My name is Claudia Herrera, a resident of Lake Oswego, and strongly in favor of Senate Bill 1606. I have a younger brother with Down Syndrome and have been a long time advocate for him. My family and I are greatly concerned about the current situation families are being put in, especially having a family member with a disability.

I ask that Senate Bill 1606 be passed at this Special Session so that Oregonians experiencing disability can access healthcare, use support from people they trust while they are hospitalized and have support when making end of life decisions.

This is an emergency and is directly related to the COVID-19 crisis. These changes cannot wait until next year because people with disabilities are experiencing these barriers to health care today.

Our family worries about being put in a tough situation if my brother falls ill. We are taking extreme precautions to make sure he does not get COVID, as we know we would not be able to go to the hospital with him. My brother would be petrified, and so would of our entire family. My brother does not have the full ability to understand what getting COVID-19 would mean and would not be able to tell the doctors what course of action he would like to take. Understanding medical terms, course of actions and procedures is already hard enough to understand, and adding that comprehension barrier would make it nearly impossible.

No person deserves to die alone or not get the support they need during these hard times. I know that any family would put their life at risk if it meant supporting their family member with disabilities.

We can't imagine my brother going through a traumatic experience, such as COVID, all on his own, and don't wish for any family to be put in this situation. I know I would not be able to focus, work or function as a sister and human being if I didn't know how my brother was doing and knowing that he would be in the hospital without a family member (like my mom, dad or myself) there present. I urge you to support and pass Senate Bill 1606.

Please feel free to use email as a written public testimony on the record.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Claudia Herrera and the Herrera-Torres Family