

Dear Senate Committee On Health Care,

I strongly support SB 584 to improve health equity for Oregonians with disabilities. Too many of my friends and colleagues have had to make difficult choices about accepting a promotion at work and weighing the risk of losing Medicaid benefits and care that they rely on to work and thrive. As a non-disabled person, I never have to consider the consequences of advancing in my career. I believe that these income and asset restrictions force a cycle of poverty for Oregonians with disabilities and we can do better.

Health equity for all Oregonians means all Oregonians have an equal opportunity to prosper through their employment, despite their disability. Too often many people with disabilities must decide between health care and work. Medicaid asset and income restrictions unjustly penalize workers with a disability who need long-term supports and services. By restricting a disabled employee's ability to earn and save, the State has closed all pathways to prosperity in the best-case scenario, and indentured that family to poverty in more difficult circumstances. The employed Oregonian with a disability, who buys-in to Medicaid for the long-term supports and services they need to thrive, can never take a pay raise, even if they merit it, without risking losing their health benefits. These policies are regressive and discriminatory against people with disabilities.

In order to be eligible for long-term supports and services through Medicaid Buy-In, an employed Oregonian with a disability must limit their countable assets to \$5,000 and income to less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level, which is \$32,000 for a family of 1 or \$55,000 for a family of 3.

For our State to achieve the State Health Improvement Plan Healthier Together Oregon goal of health equity for all, its elected leaders must listen to the plea of those affected by systemic discrimination and make changes that promote economic opportunities for all, including people with disabilities. Please support Senate Bill 584!

Thank you,

Jennifer Wilde
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Portland, OR