



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Human Services

Office of Aging and People with Disabilities

500 Summer St NE, E-02

Salem, Oregon 97301



Date: January 25, 2023

TO: The Honorable Sara Gelser Blouin, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Jane-ellen Weidanz, Deputy Director of Policy
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SUBJECT: Senate Bill 420

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, and members of the committee,

My name is Jane-ellen Weidanz and I am the Deputy Director of Policy for the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Office of Aging and People with Disabilities. Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony on SB 420.

While the Oregon Department of Human Services is neutral on SB 420, I was an original member of the Governor's Task Force on Traumatic Injury. Through that process, I saw how many individuals were struggling to access services not just from ODHS but from all resources that were available to them. While individuals applying for long term services and supports often have a case manager or social worker helping them through that process, others who need help with the volume of programs, benefits and entities who may be able to help access their benefits do not.

If passed by the legislature, ODHS expects to house this new program in the Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD). Following conversations with traumatic brain injury community partners, APD expects passage of this bill would lead to our hiring staff to act as facilitators and navigators who would help individuals connect

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DHS 0198 (01/2023)

to the services and benefits for which they are entitled. These facilitators will serve as advocates for individuals to break down barriers, to help them navigate the process so that they are not alone.

Community partners, including those with lived experience, did a tremendous job explaining the need for this program so I will not belabor the point. We are grateful for their advocacy and the tremendous support from the legislators who have chosen to co-sponsor this legislation.

I and my colleagues in APD are happy to answer any questions and to provide additional information if requested.