

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Sylvia Triplett. I live in Mulino, Oregon with my husband and three children. My ten year old son has Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Cortical Visual Impairment, and several other disabilities and medical complexities. He is one of the fortunate children with attendant care hours that qualifies for the temporary program that allows parents to be their child's paid caregiver. This program has been life changing for him. When my son was born ten years ago with multiple disabilities I had to stop working (I formerly worked in the social work field) to care for him full time and have continued to care for him ever since. He has unique and complex health care needs that require someone to be with him at all times and be able to recognize subtle nonverbal cues for his needs. This paired with the amount of therapies and doctor visits has made it impossible for me to hold a typical job. It also means that me and his father know him the best and are the most qualified and dedicated caregivers for him. Being paid for his caregiving has relieved an immense amount of stress around ensuring we can care for him at home. I have heard countless similar stories from other families in our community and feel strongly that making this a permanent change would be extremely beneficial to keeping disabled children with their families and living the quality of life they deserve.

I have also heard from many families with children who have too few support hours to be eligible for the current temporary program that this option would be the best fit for their children. I know that when my son was younger and had fewer hours than the cut off for the temporary program he still had a high level of need for support and the dedication to his unique needs and cues that only me and my husband could provide. Having access to this program then would have provided my son with a more stable home during such an important stage of child development.

Utilizing a paid parent caregiver program would not necessarily be the best fit for every family; we can see this through the utilization rates of the temporary program. However, it is extremely important that all Oregon's intellectually/developmentally disabled children have this parent caregiver OPTION so that they are equitably given access to services and supports.

I support SB 646 because it is the most inclusive, equitable, and straightforward path to providing a paid parent caregiver option to Oregon's intellectually/developmentally disabled children, which is vital for keeping families together, improving quality of life, and ensuring equitable disability services in Oregon. That being said I understand the budget concerns for expanding the paid parent caregiver option to all children eligible for attendant care support and therefore encourage you to dig deep into the numbers and projections put together by Advocates for Disability Supports and see that there is room to at least include more children than the very limited amount SB 91 proposes.

I urge you to please also consider the success that the temporary program has had and realize that much of the rules and protocols set forth in SB 91 are irrelevant or unnecessary if the program simply continues to hold parents caregivers to the same standard as not parent providers. After all, why would the state need to hold parents, who love and care for their children more than anyone else ever could, to more stringent protocols than we do complete strangers that parents are expected to let into their homes to care for their children?

Additionally, it is important to note that adults with I/DD have been allowed the option to have their parents be paid providers for many years and there was not the push for protecting the non-parent workforce with overly protectionist policies like SB 91 would impose on families and agencies serving children. It has long been proven by early childhood education and early

intervention support services that frontloading support in childhood creates the best path to adulthood for children, especially those with disabilities.

It is time that we give Oregon's children with I/DD the options that they deserve to be nurtured and supported into adulthood by a diverse team of providers that includes the people who are most invested in their futures -their parents.

Thank you so much,  
Sylvia Triplett