



Carmen Rubio
Commissioner, City of Portland

February 9, 2023

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

I'm writing to express my support for SB 576 eliminating Medicaid asset and income eligibility caps for our disabled community. As it stands, numbers of Disabled Oregonians currently have to limit or not work at all due to these caps because as they earn more, they no longer have insurance coverage for the medical aides and interventions they need to live their daily lives.

The City of Portland is striving to be a model employer in the hiring of people with disabilities. The City is using new programs such as our paid internship program for people with developmental disabilities which have the potential to become ongoing employment. We also engaging people who use assistive technology to help us create more accessible content. But I know at the City of Portland and the State of Oregon can do more to help our disabled community members to be independent and serve as valuable resources to our workplaces.

At the city, currently only 4.7% of our workforce identify as having a disability. While that number is up from 2019, we know that is nowhere near representative of the community in Multnomah County. I believe that as a city we are better when we employ people who use wheelchairs and mobility devices regularly, people who are deaf and hard of hearing, people who are blind, and people with developmental disabilities we're not only diversifying our employee pool we have employees with life experience that can help us better inform our projects, plans, events and services to be inclusive of people like them.

SB 576 is important because so many members of this community have had to limit or forgo employment to keep their Medicaid coverage. By having such limiting caps on income, many people with disabilities cannot afford the proper assistance and care they require if employed. I believe that everyone should have the ability to have the quality care they need while also being able to work. No one should be financially punished for being disabled and wanting to be employed.

We all gain value from different voices and experiences in our workforce. I strongly urge your support for SB 576 and encourage you to pass this out of committee.

Sincerely,

Carmen Rubio
Portland City Commissioner