

Submitter: Jim Davis
On Behalf Of: Or St Cn for Retired Citizens-United Seniors-OCL
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services
Measure: HB5026

Expanded Support for Centers for Independent Living Pay Equity
Testimony, Dr. Jim Davis, ODHS Public Hearing, 3/2/23
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

I'm Jim Davis, representing the Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens, United Seniors of Oregon, Oregon Consumer League and the Stop Age and Disability Discrimination in Employment Coalition (SADDIE), to strongly support an increase of \$2.6 million for Oregon's 7 Centers for Independent Living (CIL) to implement CIL Pay Equity. This does not add staff, but instead will provide living wages and benefits for the workers with disabilities who so ably staff our CILs, and who haven't seen meaningful increases in wages for a decade. The CILs are losing capable staff and the skills and institutional knowledge they take with them.

Frankly, CILs needs to be much better funded and should be expanded to all 36 counties. But that goal becomes more difficult if CIL workers are not being fairly compensated and CILs cannot adequately staff their programs.

As a longtime advocate for seniors and people with disabilities, I have had the honor of dealing with many advocates, board members and administrators connected to CILs and I couldn't be more impressed with this wonderful community-based resource, especially in the rural areas. CILs are dedicated to providing people with disabilities with the fullest levels of independence and dignity, to fully participate in their communities and families. They offer information and referral, independent living skills, peer counseling, advocacy, and life transition assistance.

I love their orientation toward a peer model with an emphasis on leadership from within the disability community. They fight for the human rights and civil liberties of people with disabilities to help them gain empowerment from a peer viewpoint. We need these CIL services and supports statewide.

We urge your support of the additional \$2.6 million for CIL Pay Equity.