

Dear Co-Chairs Campos and Valderama and Committee Members,

My name is Jeremy Mims (also known as Labaux). I am a disabled individual with Cerebral Palsy. One year ago, I was going through one of the most difficult times in my life. I was couch surfing and in fear of living on the streets. I luckily got in contact with my local Center for Independent Living – Lane Independent Living Alliance (LILA) and I was quickly connected with their peer support group as well as one-on-one peer support. LILA became my safe haven due to the help of the caring and compassionate staff members. The staff at LILA helped me to apply for and secure my housing voucher. I have now been in my housing for 6 months and I also now co-facilitate the LGBTQA+ group for LILA as a volunteer. I don't know where I would be without LILA. This safe, caring, and dedicated organization has empowered me and allowed me to shine while giving me a real sense of purpose. The LILA staff has become like family to me. I have never been treated with such compassion and respect from any other community organization or medical system – LILA's independent living model is truly one of a kind and so necessary. I know that Centers for Independent Living do their best with the limited resources they receive and I am respectfully imploring you to fund the 2.6 million dollar pay equity request for all CIL's in Oregon to ensure that these amazing staff members do not have to move on due to financial concerns. They saved my life and sanity and I am sure that these compassionate individuals have done the same for so many other consumers. Thank you for listening to me about the importance of the services that Centers for Independent Living provide to the disabled community.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Mims (aka LaBaux)