

Submitter: Travis Forrest

On Behalf Of: Abilitree- Center for Independent Living

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure: HB5026

I am writing to share my support and my hope for pay equity for all Centers for Independent living (CILS).

My name is Travis Forrest and I am the Executive Director at Abilitree. We are a center for independent living in Bend Oregon. We serve Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook county.

Why should you support pay equity for Centers for Independent living?

The short answer is we have been resourceful with the limited funds we do receive. We have adapted to limited resources as best we can, and we have stretched every dollar possible to be impactful to the communities that we serve. It is time to ask for support so we can continue to impact and pay our staff a wage they deserve. Every day, we help individuals with housing, mental health, technology, job skills, peer support and advocacy. The people in our communities deserve to have the resources we provide in the way that we provide it. We employ a majority of people that have disabilities, and we help a large multi-faceted population of people in our communities navigate their difficult needs, and we do so with a skillset that is unmatched because of personal lived experience. We are advocates for change and we utilize a holistic approach that serves the entire person.

The pay equity proposal of 2.6 million dollars would help us retain staff and pay a deserving wage. Please consider this request. We believe everyone has the right to live a full and independent life. With this additional funding for pay equity, we will remain resourceful, and we will continue to impact the lives of individuals across Oregon.

Thank you

Travis Forrest