

**Sara A. Gelser Blouin**

**State Senator**

District 8



**Oregon State Senate**

March 15, 2023

RE: SB 965

Dear Chair Patterson and members of the committee,

Thank you for considering my concerns about SB 965.

As drafted, SB 965 would reverse a policy decision made during the 2021 Legislative Session to ensure certain in person site inspections and investigations related to services for vulnerable Oregonians are conducted in person. Specifically, the measure would remove the requirement for home health agencies, caregiver registries, in-home care agencies and hospice programs to have onsite inspections. If passed as drafted, for instance, a hospice program could open without any inspector or licenser from OHA ever visiting the program. It could also have its license renewed without any regulator stepping into its facility.

If the state policy is that off-site inspections and investigations are comparable and equivalent to in person inspections, it creates the expectation that compliance is really about paperwork. Paperwork is important to document what is happening at agencies, but it does not substitute for the role of person to person contact. Paperwork, Zoom meetings and phone calls don't provide the opportunity to experience the culture and morale of an organization, the uncensored physical environment (including office environments) or the sights and smells at places such as a hospice program. In person inspections and visits also ensure that access to clients, staff and others is not controlled entirely by the regulated entity.

Oregonians rely on the state to ensure the quality, safety and compliance of organizations that provide care to them in their most significant time of need. We should ensure our state policy prioritizes the importance of face to face licensure and regulation. The consequences of errors in licensure and investigations rest primarily upon the people that are served through these entities. Taking the extra step to carry out these duties is essential to meeting the state's critical responsibility to protect those using these services.

In order to accomplish this, I've requested an amendment that would simply delete Section 2, Section 3 and Section 5. I hope that if this bill moves forward to a work session, that the committee will consider and adopt this amendment. I will send it to Mr. Dietz as soon as I receive it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara".

Senator Sara Gelser Blouin

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