



Service Employees International Union Local 503

72,000 public services workers, care providers, and non-profit employees in Oregon.

Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

SB 1521

March 6, 2024

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Subcommittee,

For the record, my name is Alice Longley Miller and I submit this testimony in support of SB 1521A on behalf of SEIU 503. SEIU 503 represents thousands of Personal Support Workers (PSWs) who provide support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities at home and in community settings, and work with them to support activities of daily living to maintain independence and personal autonomy.

Sections 1-6 are critically needed to continue implementing “Agency with Choice” as an option for individuals within ODDS and to monitor effective use of Medicaid funds, which the Senate Human Services Committee has discussed previously.

First, Section 3 of the engrossed bill restores the 2022 definition of “Agency with Choice” from Senate Bill 1548. This is needed for ODDS to continue implementation of Agency with Choice, which has been delayed in part due to definitional conflicts introduced when Senate Bill 104 passed in 2023. The restored definition will make it clear that an agency with choice serves as the employer of record for the person providing services and distinguish this worker type from existing Direct Support Professionals and Personal Support Workers. ODDS can then resume implementation of Agency with Choice, which includes engaging stakeholders in program design, conducting rulemaking, developing endorsement requirements, and standing up a regulatory framework, which will take time.

Second, Sections 1 and 2 will ensure that the important enhanced supports created by Senate Bill 104 (2023) will stay on track and be implemented this summer, as planned. It is critical that while ODDS implements Agency with Choice, these enhanced supports are available to participants to help stabilize the PSW model of services. Supporting individuals in their employer role as envisioned in SB 104 can have a huge impact on PSW’s job stability, satisfaction, and overall success and sustainability of their working relationship. Previous workgroups on SB 104 implementation identified gaps in the existing support system like helping with paperwork, recruiting PSWs, monitoring available hours, help matching families with PSWs, and more.

In summary, SB 1521-A Engrossed will give ODDS the direction it needs to resume implementation of Agency with Choice while preserving key supports for individuals and workers who choose to utilize the PSW program.

Through their union, Personal Support Workers have been trying to improve services and respond to the barriers that exist for families using this type of support model for years. The proposed amendments will improve the PSW model and correct course for the establishment of the Agency with Choice model this committee has supported over the past two legislative sessions. We look forward to continued partnership with ODDS, self advocates, and other DD stakeholders on improving the PSW model and building a responsive and beneficial Agency with Choice model in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today,

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