



Senate Committee on Human Services

Oregon State Capitol: 900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97302

3/4/25

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1029

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 1029. SEIU 503 is a union that represents thousands of hardworking individuals across Oregon, including homecare workers, personal support workers, and personal care attendants. These essential workers provide critical care to Oregon's elderly and disabled populations, often for low wages and with little financial security. Many of our members are also family caregivers, sacrificing their time, resources, and financial stability to care for loved ones. SB 1029 is an important step toward addressing the inequities in Oregon's Medicaid estate recovery rules, which disproportionately harm low-income families like those of our members.

Current Medicaid rules unfairly burden low-income families when individuals must meet strict income and asset thresholds to qualify. For a single person, this means living with an asset cap of just \$2,000—a level of financial destitution that forces families to spend down their savings and sell off assets just to access essential healthcare. But the injustice doesn't end there. After a Medicaid recipient passes away, the state can recover the cost of their medical assistance from their estate, often targeting the family home. For many of our members, the family home is the only asset of value they hope to pass on to their children. It represents not just a roof over their heads, but a foundation for generational wealth and stability. Yet, under current law, the state can seize this asset, leaving families with nothing – a practice that perpetuates cycles of poverty and denies low-income families the same opportunities for generational wealth that are available to those with higher incomes.

Senate Bill 1029 addresses these inequities by creating a common-sense exception to estate recovery when a child has been living in the home and providing care to their parent. This provision recognizes the invaluable contributions of family caregivers, who often step in to provide care that would otherwise require costly institutional support. It also acknowledges that forcing families to lose their homes after providing such care is both unjust and counterproductive. Additionally, SB 1029 removes the state's ability to void property transfers made without adequate consideration. This means that Medicaid recipients can transfer assets, like a family home, to their children or other beneficiaries without fear of the state reversing those

Service Employees
International Union
Local 503

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 12159
Salem, OR 97309

3470 Pipeline Place NE,
Suite 130
Salem, OR 97301

525 NE Oregon St.
Portland, OR 97232

1.844.503.SEIU (7348)

www.seiu503.org



transfers. For low-income families, this change is critical. It allows them to retain and pass on property, helping to build generational wealth—a privilege that has long been only available to wealthier families.

Many of our members are not only professional caregivers but also family caregivers. They know firsthand the challenges of providing care, both as paid workers and as unpaid family members. These workers often earn low wages and struggle to save for their own futures yet are expected to provide care for their loved ones without the same financial safety nets available to wealthier families. SB 1029 is a matter of fairness and dignity for these workers and their families. It ensures that the sacrifices they make to care for their loved ones are not punished by the loss of their family home. It also aligns with our values as a state that prioritizes equity and opportunity for all Oregonians, regardless of income.

Senate Bill 1029 is a necessary and compassionate reform to Oregon's Medicaid estate recovery rules. It protects low-income families from losing their homes, recognizes the contributions of family caregivers, and promotes generational wealth-building for those who have been excluded from such opportunities for far too long. We urge you to support SB 1029 and stand with low-income families, caregivers, and workers across Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hansen
Political Strategist
SEIU 503