



**House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services**  
Oregon State Capitol: 900 Court St. NE Salem, OR 97302

**March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 3497**

**Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 3497 to establish the Shared Future Oregon Task Force and develop a comprehensive state plan on aging. My name is Rachel Hansen, and I serve as a Political Strategist for SEIU Local 503. Our union represents thousands of caregivers across Oregon—homecare workers, nursing home staff, and other frontline caregiving professionals who are at the heart of supporting our state's aging population. Our members witness firsthand the challenges and opportunities of changing demographic shifts every day. They see the growing need for care, the gaps in our system, and the potential for meaningful change.

By 2030, over a million Oregonians will be 65 or older, representing 21% of our population. This "Silver Tsunami" is not just a demographic trend—it is a call to action. Older adults already account for 35% of U.S. healthcare spending, and Medicare costs are expected to double in the coming decade. At the same time, nearly a quarter of the U.S. labor force will be 55 or older by 2030, creating workforce challenges as experienced workers retire while others continue working with age-related health needs. These trends are not abstract; they are playing out in real time in Oregon, where caregivers are stretched thin, hospitals are overcrowded, and older adults struggle to access the care they need.

As caregivers, our members witness the consequences of a fragmented care system every day. They see families navigating delays in long-term services and supports (LTSS) eligibility determinations, a lack of affordable housing, food insecurity and insufficient specialized care options. They see patients stuck in hospitals because the post-acute care system is overwhelmed. And they see themselves working long hours in demanding conditions, often without the support or resources needed to provide the quality care their patients deserve.

One of the most pressing issues is the shortage of skilled caregivers, driven by low wages, lack of benefits, and high turnover rates. As demand for care grows, this shortage strains existing workers and limits access to essential services for older adults, many of whom have complex needs like mental health issues, addiction, and housing instability. At the same time,

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](http://www.seiu503.org)



systemic barriers—such as regulatory hurdles and inadequate support for LTSS—make it difficult for older adults to access the care they need, whether in hospitals, post-acute settings, or their communities.

These interconnected challenges highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive, coordinated approach to support older adults, their families, and the caregivers who dedicate their lives to this vital work. House Bill 3497 offers a path forward by creating the Shared Future Oregon Task Force, which will develop a multisector plan to address workforce shortages, streamline access to care, promote age-friendly communities, and build a system that works for everyone.

This isn't just about addressing immediate challenges, it's about creating a sustainable system that supports older adults, their families, caregivers, and the communities we serve. By investing in caregivers and innovative solutions, we can ensure Oregon meets the needs of its aging population with dignity and equity. We urge you to pass House Bill 3497 and make Oregon a leader in addressing the needs of an aging population. The task force created by this bill will provide the vision and leadership needed to build a system that works for all of us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Sincerely,

Rachel Hansen  
Political Strategist, SEIU Local 503