

My name is Melissa Fisher, resident of Hillsboro.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today in strong support of senate bill 3838.

Lest we forget the lessons of the pandemic. Before the first wave of LTC lockdowns, our seniors and caregivers were already suffering from understaffing and shortages of qualified staff. My family was kept out for 18 painful months, while a small team was put to managing an enormous population of critical care residents in his skilled nursing facility. Only weeks before the closure, my mom and I had exhausted our ability to keep my dad with behavioral variant Frontotemporal Dementia safe in home. What we didn't realize is that the lack of training, experience, and staffing would cost us all. He was isolated, and over-medicated to make him more manageable because he stretched the limits of the small team. We were allowed no eyes on him and my dad quickly lost his ability to walk or talk.

Administrators told us repeatedly they were doing the best they could with what they had available to them. Mind you the administrator told us the teams were all trained adequately on dementia care, but it was only two weeks in, when they insisted, we bring in outside 1:1 care for him or take him back. My mom was paying out of pocket \$9k a month already for a shared room. We had our backs against the wall, mom's own health with a hip break two weeks into his move-in afforded us no other option. The first statement we received for 2 weeks of the additional 1:1 care they said he needed? Care to take a guess? \$10,000. I can prove it with the invoice.

It is our states' moral failing if we don't pass SB 3838. We have a severe backlog of LTC complaints that aren't being addressed, we know that the works is hard, and pay is embarrassingly low, and those of us who can pay are paying INSANE amounts of money. So where is it all going? Not back into the teams. I know this. It's going into pockets of long-term care investors - many if not most out of state. All these LTC's here against 3838 are scared by this bill because it hurts their margins and throw lots of money at lobbyists to try and convince you that they can't afford this. I disagree. I don't care about margins, I care about people, people I love deeply and raised me and deserve far better.

It's profits over people and we haven't seen the worst of it if we do better. Oregon is already so far behind.

We need person centric care solutions and a workforce standards board to do that. We need wage standards and better, consistently trained staff. We need to attract the very best people to the long-term care industry in Oregon. The need isn't getting any smaller.

But we don't need another pandemic to see how this plays out if we do nothing. What is happening in our country right now IS our next pandemic-level crisis. Don't be fooled to think that the changes being handed down in Washington won't hurt the most vulnerable of Oregonians. Please pass SB 3838 and let's build a better future for all LTC residents and caregivers. Thank you.