

Submitter: Nancy Nelson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: 2026 Agency Reduction Options

Dear Senators Prozanski and Manning,

I write to you as a former special education teacher, licensed school psychologist, and professor of special education. I have recently become aware that the State of Oregon – where I was born and continue to reside (at 3025 Olive St, Eugene, 97405) – is considering cuts to Medicaid that would jeopardize the health and safety of children with disabilities and their families.

Imposing an income cap on a family's ability to obtain disability services is a social justice and equity issue and I strongly encourage you to advocate and vote against such a damning reduction of benefits. ALL children, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability are entitled to equitable education and public services and the Medicaid would compromise such access.

There are many reasons the cut to Medicaid is improper and harmful to your constituents with cascading consequences for our community and state, but I summarize several primary issues here:

1. Safe and appropriate disability services are scarce, regardless of income. Programs directly supported by Medicaid allow families to gain access to safe, vetted care providers and health care that may be forgone without Medicaid benefits, compromising our most vulnerable youth.
2. For many families above the proposed income cap, having financial means to afford disability care is entirely contextual; in the absence of Medicaid to hire direct support workers, many if not most double-income families that benefit from these services would require a primary caregiver to quit their job, which has a net-negative economic impact.
3. Many of the adults who would be forced to leave the workforce have worked their entire lives toward their careers and rewarding the "breadwinner" in the family almost always penalizes the mother, unfortunately. I am a first-generation college student, raised in Albany, Oregon, and being forced to give up my very hard-earned career to care for my child isn't a choice I should have to make in a modern society and state that has positioned itself as a leader in health equity, disability rights, and child welfare.

Thank you, in advance, for your advocacy against such cuts to Medicaid.

Best,

Nancy

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