

Submitter:

Alicia Ibaraki

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4040

I am writing in support of HB4040, in particular, the provision that would allow parents to work as a Personal Support Worker in addition to the currently allowed ability to work as a Direct Support Professional. Removing the prohibition that currently allows one job type, but not the other, supports disabled children's ability to exercise self-determination and make choices that are consistent with their best interests. Additionally, removing the restriction brings benefits to the state and the families.

1. The cost to the state is \$34.99 /hr for PSWs compared to \$42.24/hr for DSPs. The difference in this cost represents money the state is paying to agencies to assume administrative tasks such as payroll and benefits. It does not reflect a difference in pay to the actual care worker. Allowing parents to work in a position that costs less per hour to the state could save the state money and/or allow the state to serve a larger number of children with the same amount of money. In a time where everyone is looking for ways to stretch a budget, this just makes sense.

2. Children will receive consistent care from the people who love them most. Caregiving is a physically and emotionally draining job that is typically paid minimum wage. Oregon is experiencing a caregiver shortage, leading to children not receiving the care they are determined, by the state, to be eligible for, because there are no careworkers available to hire. You will be hard to pressed to find a minimum wage worker equipped with the medical or behavioral skill set as parents.

3. Children, even more than adults, need consistency. The quality of attachment relationships children form in childhood has lifelong impacts on their future relationships. Unlike adults who understand careworkers are employees and may leave their caregiving jobs for reasons unrelated to their clients, children can not draw that distinction. It is psychologically damaging for children to form bonds with caregivers who constantly leave them for reasons that they are too young to comprehend. This attachment disruption can exacerbate existing behavioral issues. Continuity of care is important to ensure high-quality medical care, but especially for children, to also protect their mental health. Allowing parents to work as caregivers, either as PSWs or DSP gives children the best chance for this continuity of care.