

To: Senator Kayse Jama and Members of the Committee:

Re: In Opposition of SB 1505

Good morning Chair Jama and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Resource Association (ORA). We represent a network of about 100 primarily nonprofit organizations that provide services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state. These community provider organizations provide services to people in their homes and workplaces and help people connect to their communities.

**At the heart of this vital work are Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)**, whose dedication makes this challenging yet deeply rewarding mission possible.

I am here, standing with the IDD Community, **strongly opposing SB 1505**. This bill does nothing to improve wages for this workforce. You do not need a board to tell you what this workforce needs. At your direction, DHS already paid for a Rate and Wage Study that determined funding for our services is on average 30% behind where it needs to be to create a sustainable workforce. You already have the information you need to support this workforce, you just need to figure out how to actually fund it. This is where our focus should be. These are the conversations we should be having.

In terms of other workforce protections, **this bill would allow an unelected board to have unlimited authority over employment practices**. Our services are already heavily regulated and Oregon has some of the strongest worker protection laws in the nation. We should not spend money on this new, redundant bureaucracy, especially in these difficult times.

There has been testimony about how this type of board has worked in other states. It is important to note that these other boards are merely advisory and narrowed to just one specific service; no other state allows a board like this to make sweeping decisions and legal regulations across a workforce that works in a variety of different settings and services.

**ORA and the community organizations we represent have been the voice of advocacy for Direct Support Professionals for many years**, advocating for improved working conditions and better wages, whereas the proponents of this bill have not historically stepped up for this workforce and have sometimes directly advocated against our Direct Support Professionals. This is one of the many reasons why self-advocates, family members and the IDD community at large oppose this bill.

IDD services are very individualized based on the needs and desires of each person. **Another concern is that the Workforce Standards Board will reduce choice for people with IDD** and make services more standardized, instead of respecting the unique nature of each person's services. Eleven people making decisions that would impact the services of thousands of people in their homes and communities creates a lot of concern.

SB 1505 would divert much needed funding from our workforce and add further administrative burden to an already complex, highly regulated system. **I urge you not to let this confusing, unnecessary bill move forward. Vote NO on SB 1505.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lois Gibson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lois Gibson, Executive Director Oregon Resource Association