



February 3, 2026

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelly Thran, and I have the privilege of serving as CEO of Community Services, Incorporated. Our organization supports adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families across Oregon. I am writing in strong opposition to Senate Bill 1505.

Oregon's direct care workforce does not need another process. It needs pay—real, meaningful, and sustained investment. SB 1505 provides none.

The Legislature already has clear, data-driven guidance on what this workforce needs. The Department of Human Services recently completed and published the **2025 APD-ODDS Rate and Wage Study Findings and Recommendations**, which identified a **\$530 million funding gap** for home- and community-based IDD services. The study estimates that Oregon would need **\$800 million in General Fund investment** simply to bring direct support professionals to an average wage of **\$23.20 per hour**.

You do not need a new board to tell you what you already know: wages are too low, the workforce is in crisis, and the solution is investment—not another layer of process.

SB 1505 would grant broad, open-ended authority to an unelected board to create new employment and workplace mandates for home- and community-based care settings. These are decisions that properly belong to the Legislature—not to a body that is not accountable to voters, taxpayers, or the individuals and families who depend on these services.

This bill effectively delegates legislative authority over employment practices to a board that can act without the checks, balances, or transparency that this chamber is responsible for upholding.

The scope of SB 1505 is extraordinarily broad. It authorizes the creation of workplace mandates enforceable through litigation, with no clear limits on what those mandates could include. Many of these requirements would likely duplicate existing employment laws and regulatory frameworks already enforced by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Oregon Health Authority, the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

This is not a targeted or narrowly tailored policy. It is a sweeping grant of authority that could fundamentally reshape the employment landscape for home- and community-based services—without legislative oversight and without any guarantee that the resulting mandates would be funded.

The workforce shortage in IDD and home- and community-based services is not caused by a lack of process. It is caused by low wages and chronic underfunding. The state's own independent study has already made that clear.

SB 1505 does not raise wages. It does not close the funding gap. It does not stabilize the workforce. Instead, it creates a new regulatory structure with virtually unlimited authority and additional costs—while leaving the core problem unaddressed.

I urge you to reject SB 1505. Oregon's direct care workforce deserves real investment, not another layer of expensive bureaucracy. The Legislature already has the information it needs to act. The time to invest in this workforce is now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Thran, CEO
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