



Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about the proposed reductions for the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). For the record, my name is ToiNae Gibson and I am the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Program Manager for Multnomah County Community Developmental Disability Program (CDDP). Our CDDP is a member of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP).

One of the central roles of the CDDP is to provide case management services to individuals who experience an intellectual and/or developmental disability, commonly referred to collectively as I/DD. Case managers who serve individuals experiencing I/DD related conditions, such as autism, Down syndrome, and Cerebral Palsy, are a lifeline. They protect the health and safety of everyone on their caseload and ensure these individuals receive essential services to directly improve their quality of life. Whether it be finding a job, housing, or transportation, a case manager will always be there when called upon.

As part of the budget reduction process, ODHS identified the “Parental Income Disregard” as a program that could be eliminated to help the Legislature balance the budget. This program allows children who otherwise may not be eligible for Medicaid to have their family’s income “disregarded” to allow them to qualify for various I/DD services that are part of this federal initiative. The Parental Income Disregard has helped a number of families who are right on the edge of eligibility for Medicaid receive in-home provider assistance and other supports that help these communities thrive.

For example, Medicaid eligibility can provide children in the I/DD community with essential environmental modifications, such as the installation of wheelchair lifts. For one of our clients, this modification significantly improved their quality of life while protecting the long-term health of their caregivers, who otherwise faced the physical strain of lifting an aging child.

Additionally, Medicaid grants access to Behavioral Professional services. These specialists equip families with strategies to manage high-risk behaviors, such as self-injury or elopement from home. By empowering parents to maintain a safe home environment, these services are vital in preventing the placement of children into foster or group homes.

Eliminating this program may force parents into impossible trade-offs, such as diverting funds from housing, food, or utilities to pay for private caregiving. This shift risks leaving children in the I/DD community with significant reductions to the services they rely on daily. Ultimately,



these choices are likely to drive up costs for other social service programs as families are forced to seek alternative support measures.

We urge the Legislature to avoid making this reduction, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ToiNae Gibson
Children and Young Adult Program Manager
Multnomah County I/DD Program
209 SW 4th Ave. Ste 610
Portland, OR 97204