

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 1505, which proposes the creation of a Workforce Standards Board.

While the goal of improving workplace conditions and wages is important, SB 1505 raises significant concerns regarding cost, effectiveness, and governance. Experience with similar regulatory structures shows that new standards are often introduced without adequate funding or administrative support. This results in increased costs and additional bureaucratic burdens for employers and service providers, particularly small businesses already operating on narrow margins.

The proposed board also risks reducing flexibility and access to services. Rigid regulations can stifle innovation, limit care hours, and restrict the ability of providers and employers to adapt to changing economic and community needs. Oregon's ID and DD workforce and service sectors are diverse, and a one-size-fits-all regulatory approach will unintentionally harm both workers and those they serve.

Additionally, SB 1505 appears to undermine the authority of existing, specialized agencies by creating overlapping and potentially redundant oversight. This duplication can lead to confusion, inconsistent standards, and inefficient use of public resources, rather than meaningful improvements in working conditions. There are also serious concerns about representation and expertise. Testimony on similar boards has shown that they often lack sufficient input from frontline providers, families, and industry experts who understand day-to-day realities. Decisions made without these voices risk being disconnected from practical, on-the-ground needs.

Confidentiality and privacy issues are another troubling aspect of the proposal. Certain standards under consideration could jeopardize employee privacy or require disclosure of sensitive information without appropriate safeguards.

Finally, the structure of an unelected board operating with limited checks and balances raises accountability concerns. Policies that significantly affect workers, employers, and service recipients and their families should be developed through transparent, accountable processes with direct legislative oversight.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 1505 and instead pursue solutions that strengthen existing systems, fund the known wage gap, preserve flexibility, and include meaningful input from those most directly affected.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert S Neal