

Submitter: Faith Lawson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1505

Senator Jama and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to formally express my opposition to SB 1505. Opposition to this bill is widespread across the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) community, including self-advocates, families, service providers, and other stakeholders who are directly engaged in the delivery and oversight of these services.

SB 1505 would create an additional layer of bureaucracy within a system that is already subject to extensive state and federal regulation. The establishment of a new board would increase administrative costs without improving service quality or accountability, and would divert limited resources away from direct services and the workforce that provides them.

The IDD system currently relies on a comprehensive and inclusive process for developing rules and policies. This process is open to all interested parties, including self-advocates, family members, providers, labor representatives, and state and county officials. It ensures that policies are informed by lived experience, operational expertise, and collaboration. SB 1505 would replace this inclusive structure with decision-making authority vested in 11 unelected individuals, reducing transparency and limiting meaningful stakeholder participation.

The bill also establishes wage and benefit standards without ensuring the necessary legislative funding to implement them. Absent guaranteed funding, these standards create unfunded mandates that place providers at risk and introduce instability into the service system. Furthermore, the bill attempts to standardize services that are intentionally individualized. IDD services are designed to be person-centered and responsive to the unique needs, preferences, and goals of each individual. Imposing uniform standards undermines choice, flexibility, and self-determination for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Rate increases are already passed through to Direct Support Professionals by providers. This is supported by the state's Rate and Wage Study, which demonstrates that average DSP wages exceed current reimbursement levels. The Rate and Wage Model provides the legislature with sufficient data and tools to responsibly adjust wages and benefits in a sustainable manner. Establishing a new board to replicate this analysis is an inefficient use of public funds.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on SB 1505. Please do not transfer broad authority over IDD services to an unelected body when existing, effective, and inclusive processes are already in place.