

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Starr and Committee Members,

I'm Leslie Hoffman, Executive Director at Home Life a nonprofit in Corvallis that provides support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With 30 years in IDD services and many years providing direct care myself, I urge you to vote NO on SB 1505, which proposes a Workforce Standards Board for Home and Community-Based Services.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) perform essential, difficult work—supporting daily living, administering medications, monitoring health, and providing emotional and behavioral support. Despite the demanding nature of the job, many DSPs struggle to support their own families because of low wages. They stay because they find the work meaningful, but too many ultimately leave because they simply can't afford to stay. These are exactly the employees Oregon needs to retain.

When I became Executive Director three years ago, my priorities were improving quality of supports and strengthening the workforce. But as a nonprofit, financial constraints have been our biggest challenge. For nearly three years, we couldn't afford wage increases. We instead focused on what we *could* offer—staff appreciation, stable benefits, and low-cost ways to support morale.

Oregon's IDD system has made incredible progress since Fairview's closure. People now choose where they live and work and, have increased their independence, inclusion, and self-determination. This progress is only possible with dedicated DSP's and strong leadership that prioritizes the essential supports people with disabilities need to thrive.

SB 1505 directly threatens wage progress. It adds new obligations and creates a new Board with rulemaking authority—without providing the funding needed to raise wages. Providers are already meeting extensive training, safety, and employment requirements. Adding another layer of regulation duplicates existing systems, increases administrative burden, and diverts limited resources away from the people we support.

The bill would grant an unelected Board sweeping authority over workplace and employment standards in home and community-based settings. This expansion of bureaucracy does *not* address the real problem: chronically low DSP wages. Wage standards mean nothing unless the Legislature funds them.

Oregon has long been a national leader in person-centered supports. Additional layers of regulation risk undermining flexibility, innovation, dignity, and inclusion—the core of what makes Oregon's system strong.

After more than three decades in this field, I believe SB 1505 moves us backward. We don't need another Board; we need direct investment in the workforce that makes independence and quality of life possible for Oregonians with developmental disabilities.

I respectfully urge you to vote **NO** on SB 1505 and instead continue investing directly in DSP wages and the services that change lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration



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