

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, and members of the Committee.

My name is Natasha Atkinson, and I am writing to urge you to **vote NO on SB 1505**.

SB 1505 is being presented as a pathway to improving wages for Oregon's direct care workforce. But the reality is much different. This bill delays meaningful wage investment rather than delivering it. It sets out a lengthy process, new bureaucracy, and an unelected board — yet **not one dollar of actual wage funding is guaranteed**.

We do not need another board to tell us what we already know.

DHS just completed a comprehensive Rate and Wage Study identifying a need for **\$530 million** just to bring wages to *\$23.20 an hour* — a basic living wage in this economy. You already have this information.

Providers have been doing their part. At UHI, we pass the legislative increases onto our Direct Support Professionals. In fact, we operated at a deficit in both 2024 & 2025. And yet, our turnover rate was only 8%. We are stretching every dollar to its limit.

And while the proponents of SB 1505 claim to support Direct Support Professionals and this sector, they have repeatedly advocated against our DSPs and against proposed increases in recent years.

This bill is effectively a blank check for workplace regulation — with no fiscal analysis, no cost guardrails, and no accountability to the Legislature. The impact on community providers could be enormous, directly affecting our ability to serve Oregonians with disabilities.

SB 1505 grants an unelected board **open-ended authority** to create workplace mandates enforceable through lawsuits — mandates that could reach into nearly every aspect of employment. That includes staffing ratios, health insurance requirements, paid time off mandates, overtime caps, hours of work, hiring practices, grievance procedures, scheduling, training, and much more.

If the goal is to strengthen the workforce, then let's do the one thing that has been proven to work: **fund the wages**.

Not study them.

Not regulate around them.

Fund them.

SB 1505 doesn't raise wages.

It creates process instead of pay, bureaucracy instead of stability, and uncertainty instead of solutions.

For the sake of Oregon's direct care workforce — and the Oregonians who rely on these essential services — I urge you to **reject SB 1505** and instead invest directly in the wage increases this workforce desperately needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB 1505 Delays, Rather Than Delivers, Meaningful Wage Investment

**X**

SB 1505 isn't about
increased wages
for workers.

**X**

SB 1505 fails to
prioritize investing
directly in
wage increases.

**X**

SB 1505 provides false
wage and benefit
standards that mean
nothing if not funded
by the Legislature.

SB 1505 Offers Process, Not Pay, for Oregon's Direct Care Workforce

The Legislature doesn't need a Board to tell you these wages need real meaningful investment—DHS recently completed a study and published an independent report in 2025 that identified a \$530 million funding gap for home and community based IDD workers—estimating a total investment needed of \$800M in general funds just to bring this direct care workforce to \$23.20 an hour. See APD-ODDS Rate and Wage Study Findings and Recommendations.

SB 1505 Grants the Board Unlimited Authority Over Employment Practices

LC 38 allows an unelected board—not the Legislature—to make new employment and workplace laws for home and community care services and settings.

SB 1505 Is A Blank Check for Workplace Regulation

SB 1505 grants the Board open-ended authority to create workplace mandates that are enforceable through lawsuits. This authority could extend to working conditions such as mandated health insurance or other minimum benefits, predictive scheduling, staffing ratios, labor peace agreements, PTO/PSL pay out requirements, accrual of sick leave and utilization, unpaid Leave, overtime caps, hours of work, discipline, grievance-arbitration, seniority pay/hiring/job openings, vacancy hiring and advertising, accommodations, performance evaluations, use of phone/vehicle, background checks, employee registries, or training.

¹https://www.healthmanagement.com/wp-content/uploads/Rate-and-Wage-study-plain-language-executive-summary_EN.pdf

**SB 1505
Misses the Mark on
Raising Wages for
Direct Care Workers**

**X**

**VOTE NO
ON SB 1505**



Amanda Dalton on behalf of Oregon Resource Association
Jack Dempsey, on behalf of Community Providers Association of Oregon