

Senator Jama and Members of the Committee;

I am writing to strongly oppose SB 1505. Please note that the entire IDD Community is standing opposed to this bill. Adding another costly layer of bureaucracy to services that are already heavily regulated service benefits no one.

The IDD community already has a very engaging process to develop rules and policy.

Everyone is welcome. This includes self-advocates, family members, providers and union representatives and state and county officials. Please do not reduce this inclusive process to 11 unelected people making decisions about an industry they don't understand.

This bill will create confusing wage and benefit standards that mean nothing if not funded by the legislature. It also standardized services that are anything but standard, as there are many different IDD services and each is uniquely designed to meet the needs and desires of the person using the service. Do not remove choice and individualism for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Additionally, SEIU already has the ability to advocate for change within the organizations it represents. It is concerning that represented employees are testifying about the need for better access to training and higher wages - issues that are typically addressed through collective bargaining and union representation. SEIU has had opportunities to demonstrate progress on these priorities for its own members, yet significant gaps remain. Given this context, it is reasonable to question the creation of an unelected board involving the state and SEIU when similar challenges have not been resolved at the organizational level.

Providers already pass on any rate increases to their Direct Support Professionals. This is evidenced by the Rate and Wage study that shows an average wage that is well above what is being reimbursed. The Rate and Wage model also gives you the tools and information you need to fairly increase wages and benefits to a sustainable level. Don't waste funding on a board to tell you this. You already paid for the study.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 1505. Do not allow an unelected board to take sweeping control of these services.

Sincerely,
Kayla Seideman