

SB 1505 - OPPOSE - Workforce Standards Board

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Starr, and members of the committee, my name is Ed Diehl, and I represent House District 17, East Salem, through the majestic Santiam Canyon.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 1505. Oregonians are frustrated, and rightly so, because too many decisions that affect their daily lives are no longer made by elected representatives but by elected boards and bureaucracies, and I think SB1505 is another example of that troubling trend. This bill creates a new Workplace Standards Board with broad authority over wages, benefits, training requirements, and working conditions across home and community-based services. This is a major policy decision that impacts thousands of workers and small businesses. And I'll tell you what, those workers and small businesses don't want this.

Take a look at the overflow rooms. I've talked to them. They do not want this. These kinds of decisions should not be handed off to a board that voters cannot remove, and families cannot hold accountable. You know, if these workers need more money, that is a decision that we as legislators can make.

I would argue that there's a case that they do. If they do, then let's do it. We don't need a board to tell us that. We already know that. In fact, some of these workers got a raise last year, and we're taking it away this year.

These are decisions for us as legislators to make, not an unelected bureaucracy. I also want to acknowledge the history here. This is the same policy framework advanced last session when SEIU misrepresented worker support for the Home Care Workplace Standards Board legislation. In June, with the support of seven other legislators, I filed an ethics complaint against SEIU for misrepresenting individual support for that bill. And in December, the Oregon Ethics Commission voted to move that complaint to full investigation.

I want to make sure you guys know, if you go into those other rooms, you're going to see teal shirts for I/DD nonprofit providers that are opposed to this bill. Lots of them. You're also going to see red shirts, the adult foster care folks. Those folks are also opposed to this bill. Even though they're not in this bill this time, they know it's coming for them.

Last session, this legislation was strongly opposed by the workers, the same case as it is now. While some of those workers have now been carved out of this bill, they're not fooled by what's happening here. It's obvious, and we heard in testimony earlier, that once this board is established for I/DD workers, the push will come, whether next session or the next one after, to add long care term workers back into the board. So my message to long term

care workers: they're coming after you next. Keep up the fight and make sure that our legislators hear loud and clear you do not want this imposed on them.

Oregon already faces serious workforce shortages in caregiving. One size fits all mandates will make it harder for small providers and small businesses to do their job. And when flexibility disappears, access disappears, and it's our most vulnerable populations who will pay the price.

In closing, if this legislature believes that standards should change, then we should debate and enact those changes openly and directly and not outsource lawmaking to an unelected board. For those reasons, I urge opposition to SB1505.