

February 14, 2026

Senator Jama and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 1505.

I have worked in the field of developmental disabilities for more than 30 years. Throughout this time, I have witnessed both significant challenges and meaningful successes. The most impactful and lasting improvements have consistently emerged from grassroots efforts and from the voices of individuals with lived experience.

The creation of a Workforce Standards Board would add another layer of bureaucracy between individuals receiving services and those making decisions that directly affect those services. Historically, this type of structure has not benefited the people served. I view this similarly to the role of school boards, which are often far removed from the day-to-day realities of students, families, and educators. As a result, those closest to the work frequently struggle to have their voices heard. The scope of responsibility entrusted to such boards is simply too broad to allow for effective, informed decision-making.

Under SB 1505, a Workforce Standards Board would be tasked with making decisions impacting services across the entire state of Oregon. Given the vast geographic, cultural, and service delivery differences across the state, it is unrealistic to expect a single board to be equitably informed about the diverse and complex needs of all communities.

Additionally, SB 1505 would divert critical resources—both time and funding—away from direct services. At a time when Oregon is facing potential cuts to essential services and supports, it is not prudent to introduce new administrative expenses that do not directly benefit individuals receiving services.

I urge you to listen to and prioritize the voices of those with lived experience. Our limited resources should be directed toward strengthening direct services and supporting the workforce already providing critical care and support to people with developmental disabilities. We do not need additional bureaucracy; we need funding that goes directly to the workforce and the individuals they serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Santiago