

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

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Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1505

I have been a DSP with the Oregon Supported Living Program for 32 years. In my time, I've seen a lot of changes, and see much more that must change. Having been a worker without a protected voice before we formed our union local at OSLP, I know what it is like for the majority of DSPs out there. Since we organized in 1996, I have first-hand experience with utilizing that protected voice of mine to work cooperatively with my employer to address concerns and create change. It isn't all grievances and bargaining, we have forged a quality relationship.

This to me is a microcosm of what can be achieved when the various entities involved in care work can come together in a space to discuss better paths to support, better ways to support the work, meeting the needs of all stakeholders... I don't only dream this, I live it. The Workforce Standards Board has the chance to be this driver of change: People who receive supports, the workers providing the supports, the providers that provide the workplace and management, and the state all at a table. This new concept is in no way duplicative, as the opposition is fond of saying. It would finally be a collaborative decision process from all perspectives of this work, as inclusive as possible.

I understand why there is fear of this. Partly it is a loss of unilateral power that providers enjoy in non-union shops. It is the fear of union incursion (note: if you run a good company and truly treat your workers with dignity, they're not likely to unionize). The fact is, bureaucracy alone is not sufficient to provide ideas and concepts for what we do. They are far better suited to provide oversight over concepts we would generate on the board. There is also a fear of "one size fits all." I don't think this would happen. With the constituency represented directly on the board, nuances would be involved in the decisions. Really, it would set minimum standards that are universal. For example, training: it doesn't matter what service model you are delivering, challenging behaviors all benefit from the trained and supported skill sets for such realities. This presently does not exist across the board, and that is approaching criminal in consequences.

There would not be a limitation on innovation or creativity, in fact there would now be a vehicle to pass those ideas around. I do not buy the argument that this will limit individuals in their rights and choices, I believe it will enhance them. To say otherwise is to say that the workers, the providers, and the state are not framing things from a self-directed life perspective... and frankly, there are deficiencies in this regard... hence why having persons supported on the board, contributing their voices directly, would have profound impact. The very things people fear from this board

ALREADY EXIST IN OUR DEFICIENT SYSTEM. I believe this board is a fundamental step to evolving. I know I have evolved over my 32 years doing this work directly, and I want to see this step taken to further those goals, to discover and implement the best paths possible for achieving in reality what we tend to only talk about philosophically.

There certainly is work to do on this bill. Shall we do it together instead of this perpetual rumination of opposition? This DSP hopes that the stakeholders can suspend ego and positions, and do something ground breaking. Let's be AMAZING TOGETHER instead of further cementing our existence in the status quo mindset that is the true oppressor of the enlightened and empowered individual.