

February 6, 2026

SB 1505 and All Forthcoming Amendments — Opposition

Senate Interim Committee on Rules and Executive Appointments

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in firm opposition to SB 1505 and any forthcoming or proposed amendments that would establish a workforce standards board. I respectfully urge the Committee not to advance this legislation.

I offer this perspective informed by **36 years of professional experience in aging and disability services**, including direct service delivery, system leadership, regulatory engagement, and public accountability work across long-term care and community-based settings. Throughout my career, my focus has been on strengthening quality, access, workforce stability, and public trust for older adults and people with disabilities. It is from that depth of experience that I raise serious concern about SB 1505.

1. SB 1505 sets a concerning and destabilizing precedent

Even if certain providers are excluded at this time, SB 1505 establishes a precedent that warrants caution. Once the Legislature authorizes a workforce standards board for one segment of the workforce, it becomes significantly easier to expand that authority or replicate it across additional sectors—often without sufficient evaluation of long-term impact.

Oregon’s aging and disability services systems are already under extraordinary strain. Providers and community-based organizations face persistent workforce shortages, rising service acuity, expanding regulatory complexity, and chronically constrained funding. Introducing workforce standards boards into this environment will increase operating costs, administrative burden, and uncertainty.

These costs do not remain theoretical. They translate directly into reduced service capacity, longer waitlists, and diminished access to care for seniors and people with disabilities—particularly in rural and underserved communities. In systems already under strain, even well-intended policy missteps can cause irreversible harm.

2. Workforce standards boards are not a proven or effective policy solution

Proponents suggest that workforce standards boards foster collaboration and improve workforce outcomes. However, there is no clear evidence that healthcare or human services workforce standards boards have delivered durable workforce stability or improved access to care.

During the February 4, 2026 hearing, proponents referenced Nevada as an example. That comparison is misleading. Nevada's board is advisory only and does not possess the scope or authority contemplated under SB 1505. The proposal before this Committee represents a materially different and far more consequential governance structure.

Over multiple decades, I have observed repeated workforce "reform" efforts that rely on parallel governance structures rather than legislative solutions. These approaches consistently add cost, complexity, and division while failing to address the root causes of workforce instability—chronic underfunding, reimbursement misalignment, rising acuity, and administrative burden.

3. SB 1505 weakens transparency and public accountability

Oregonians deserve workforce policy decisions to be made through Oregon's established legislative and governmental processes—systems that are transparent, constitutionally grounded, and accountable to the public. They deserve clarity about how decisions are made and how to engage their elected representatives when concerns arise.

SB 1505 shifts significant workforce policy authority away from these established processes and into a new board structure with unclear lines of accountability. This shift undermines transparency and weakens public trust, particularly for workers, service recipients, and families who depend on these systems functioning effectively.

Accountability matters not only in theory, but in daily operational reality. When accountability is diluted, outcomes suffer.

4. This proposal reflects organizational interests rather than demonstrated system need

I am not opposed to unions. However, based on long professional experience in aging and disability services, I have observed repeated efforts to advance workforce policy through mechanisms that concentrate decision-making authority outside the legislative process. In this sector, SEIU-backed initiatives have too often prioritized organizational leverage over sustainable workforce solutions or improved outcomes for the people who rely on these services.

Oregon's workforce challenges are real and urgent. Yet creating a workforce standards board does not address the structural drivers of instability. When policy solutions are shaped by organizational interests rather than system realities, both workers and the people who depend on care are left worse off.

Conclusion

For these reasons, grounded in decades of professional experience and a commitment to Oregon's most vulnerable residents, I respectfully urge the Committee to exercise caution and stewardship by declining to advance SB 1505 or any forthcoming amendments that would result in the creation of a workforce standards board.

Oregon's challenges demand transparent, evidence-based solutions—not unproven governance structures that risk increasing costs, reducing access, and weakening public accountability.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Oregon.

Respectfully submitted,



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