

March 22, 2013

P.O. Box 6014  
Salem, Oregon 97304-3060

State Capitol of Oregon  
Joint Ways and Means/Human Services Subcommittee  
900 Court Street, N.E.  
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Members of the Committee:

As a former worker for several years in the areas of developmental disabilities and mental health, I wish to comment on the information presented at the March 21, 2013 meeting of the Joint Ways and Means/Human Services Subcommittee held at 1 p.m. at the State Capitol of Oregon. I identify myself as a graduate of The University of Iowa with a Bachelor of Science degree in General Science and a Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, along with being a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (C.R.C.) since 1987 until present.

The comment, our "system is broken", addresses the need to reexamine priorities in health care and suggests that what may have seemed important in the past needs to change because of current needs. In particular, I agree with a stated need for additional staff in our self-sufficiency offices to address poverty in the State of Oregon. Caseworkers who have up to 500 contacts per month need a reduced caseload in order to verify information given. I am especially concerned that fraud is occurring at an increasing rate in our state and country and know that the scheme of one person assuming different identities and collecting benefits for each identity has recently been verified costing our government over \$200,000 for that individual.

Further, I hold the opinion that more funding for developmental disabilities should not occur. Instead, I believe that spending a quoted estimate of \$33,000 per child with developmental disabilities needs to be reduced. Based on my working experience, I know that children who are damaged to the point of functioning in the severe and profound range of mental retardation will progress so little that justifying costly services should not occur. I am of the opinion that these individuals need habilitative care which focuses on basic needs and requires fewer staff.

A last concern of mine is that both staff and clients involved in the various programs in the area of developmental disabilities need to be scrutinized for who and what they represent. Authenticity of both staff and clients is important. While this statement may seem quite questionable, I liken some of the "success stories" told at the legislative session to a performance by manipulative criminals.

Thank you for considering these thoughts and reviewing priorities for the overall good of the State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

*Evelyn R. Ferris*

Evelyn R. Ferris, B.S., M.A., C.R.C.