



March 19, 2019

Dear Chair Senator Gelser, Vice Chair Senator Heard, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Anna Keenan-Mudrick, and I am the Legislative Chair for the Community Providers Association of Oregon (CPAO), which represents over 20 agencies who serve Oregon's citizens who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in various parts of the state.

I am submitting this written testimony to communicate **CPAO's Support of Senate Bill 809**.

This bill calls for clearly outlined, publicly shared criminal history check weight test criteria that would help ensure transparency and consistency in the Final Fitness Determination process. It also allows for access to contested case hearings for those deemed ineligible for employment through this process.

When a committed employee's job is on the line, it is critical that all context is assessed and taken into consideration. Particularly when there is variation in which types of events counties determine to be neglectful or abusive, and now that Protective Service findings, and given that past DHS, child welfare, and unemployment records are now considered in the weight test. In some cases, these findings and records are resulting in long time employees losing their positions for events that occurred many years ago, under very different life circumstances. Having clear, known criteria for what non-criminal events are currently considered potentially disqualifying and how it is weighed at the state level, in addition to allowing for a fair opportunity for an employee whose career is now in jeopardy to present and argue their case, is only right and just.

Further, in a time in which the demand for services outweighs provider capacity, inadvertently weeding out the wrong employees creates even more pressure on an already highly stressed provider system; and of greatest concern is how it creates stress for those we support who already experience an unprecedented level of Direct Support Professional loss in the midst of this workforce crisis.

In summary, the passage of this bill would support and facilitate fair consideration for and consistent treatment of many who have dedicated their careers to serving those who experience IDD, while still allowing the state to weed out current and potential employees who have caused harm or pose significant risk.

In Appreciation of Your Partnership and Support,

Anna Keenan-Mudrick, MSW
Executive Director, Community Access Services
Legislative Chair, Community Providers Association of Oregon