



March 26, 2019

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of OR, we respectfully request your support for Senate Bill 669.

Two million in-home caregivers are among the legions of poorly paid, often poorly trained service workers in the United States.¹ These caretakers are usually women, often of color, who provide critical care for home-bound clients who cannot get out of bed or meet their own needs. They are often under appreciated – until their critical services are needed.

An overwhelming number of older adults wish to remain in their homes as long as possible.² One of the greatest challenges we face in the immediate future is building a skilled, stable in-home caregiving workforce to help meet the daily needs of America's rapidly aging population. Homecare is the nation's fastest growing job category, underscoring the reality that insufficient numbers of family members—primarily spouses and adult children—are available to provide needed care.³ We need to protect these Oregonians who are currently being cared for, and likely will eventually be cared for, by in-home caregivers by providing these workers the training necessary to do their important jobs.

A well-trained in-home care workforce represents the foundation of an effective homecare system, one that empowers elders to make their own choices, improves health and safety, reduces hospitalization and medical costs, and provides family caregivers with the respite and support they need. This training goes far beyond support in helping with daily tasks. In-home caregiving is a professional service. Almost by definition elder adults often cannot apprehend if home environments are unsafe, and in-home caregivers need to be able to quickly spot and remedy these situations. Those needing in-home care are often taking multiple medications which need to be taken at specific times of day, a task which many older adults find challenging. The results of guessing wrong can be disastrous. In-home caregivers also need to understand how to support the physical and emotional needs of the individual who is receiving care.

It is also the case that as important as training is, it is equally important to ensure that private home care agencies are required to adhere to consistent standards of care. Right

¹ <https://phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/phi-home-care-workers-key-facts.pdf>

² <https://www.seniorliving.org/home-care/>

³ <https://www.asaging.org/blog/preparing-america-care-training-our-nations-homecare-workers>

now there seems to be a hodgepodge of entities that say they are providing services, but without adding backbone to training requirements, it will be difficult to ensure that they are in fact being followed.

Those who require in-home care services need to know they are being cared for by professional, well-trained caretakers. SB 669 goes a long way to ensuring that level of care will be what Oregonians will receive.

Respectfully Submitted,

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