

My name is Bobbi Boles, and my sister and I have owned Home Instead Senior Care, an In Home Care Agency located in Salem, Oregon for almost 12 years. We provide jobs for over 60 caregivers, and other amazing employees, all of whom are dedicated to helping over 50 vulnerable Oregonians remain as independent as possible in their own homes.

I urge you to oppose SB 669. It seems the bill attempts to provide protections for in-home care agency caregivers. In the almost 12 years I have owned my agency, we have never experienced a substantiated complaint from a caregiver. My agency, or every other in home care agency, could not provide the care we are dedicated to providing, without our caregivers. We operate in a world of worker scarcity; I could not employ enough quality caregivers if I did not provide a good work environment. Indeed, I work hard to honor these essential workers by providing the best possible work situation for my caregivers, including offering free training and education, wage level increases and bonuses, providing 24-hour office support and other services to assist with client families and immediate caregiver replacement if the assigned caregiver is unable to work for whatever reason. My caregivers matter.

The regulations imposed in this bill are unnecessary. The Oregon Health Authority already has one of the most comprehensive in-home care agency oversight regulatory systems in the nation. I know this because our Corporate Office has franchises in all 50 states. Because of our significant regulatory oversight, our Corporate Office has chosen its Oregon agencies to participate in a pilot program testing an expanded scope of service. They recognize that we have the necessary state oversight to ensure safe client care while expanding our scope to include such services as glucose testing for diabetics and assisting with feeding tubes.

In addition to adding unnecessary new regulation, this bill would force many in-home care agencies out of business, removing access to care to countless Oregonians. For example, the bill requires that I maintain liquid reserves equal to at least two months of operating expenses. This is impossible for my small business and would come at the expense of my ability to cover monthly expenses, including paying my caregivers as much as possible each month. The bill also requires that I publicly disclose proprietary information such as my employment handbook and wage schedules and even my franchise agreement. Disclosure of these documents does not improve either client care or caregiver working conditions.

Worst of all, SB 669 actually poses a threat to my clients. The bill would require that I offer the same training as is required for Medicaid registry workers, or, if the suggested amendment is considered, training approved by DHS as meeting the standards of the mandated home care training. Currently, there is no mandated training for the Medicaid registry workers. There are proposed rules establishing training, but even the training referenced in these rules falls far short of the training I am required by Oregon Health Authority rules to provide to my caregivers. The legislature should not require me to provide less training to my caregivers than I do now.

Please support the needs of vulnerable Oregonians to remain in their own home by supporting in home care agencies and rejecting SB 669