

February 1, 2022

TO Chair Sara Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Art Robinson and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 1556 regarding the certification process for Home Health Care Workers and Personal Attendants and placing the administration of them into the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Currently employers are responsible for initiating and maintaining workers' certification which includes background checks and verification of completed training required. SB 1555 authorizes the Department of Human Services to share this information with the public. Business providers and families seeking services would be able to access the registry and confirm that prospective hires are properly certified.

A public certification process should lead to better compensation for those engaged in these challenging jobs. From what I hear caregivers become cooks, launderers, cleaning services in addition to tending the often demanding attention of their client. Their pay needs to reflect the responsibilities expected.

Records will be accessible for the health care worker's personal use if the person should desire to use that portfolio of information in pursuing further opportunities in the field of personal services such as: becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse or Registered Nurse. All of these are robust areas of need now and will continue for the future.

Senate Bill 1556 is an important part of access to quality health care for all. No one really chooses to be dependent upon care such as a Personal Assistant is expected to provide, but unfortunately it is an unescapable part of life for some. An accident may find a very young person in need of these services. This is not just an "end of life or age issue." It is a health services issue in general.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 1556 and my comments.

Katherine Goodwin, American Association of University Women, Gresham Area Branch