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On Behalf Of: Or St Cn for Retired Citizens United Srs OCL
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1556

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Senate Rules Committee
SB 1556, Direct Care Provider Certification-Registry
Testimony by
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United Seniors of Oregon/Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens
Oregon Consumer League

The Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens, United Seniors of Oregon and the Oregon Consumer League want to express our strong support for SB 1556, which would require Aging and People with Disabilities/Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to develop a certification process and public registry for home and community-based direct care workers statewide.

Oregon has built a senior and disability services and supports system that is considered a national model for in-home and community-based care, providing the most independent living environment for seniors and persons with disabilities through continuum of care options. Home and community-based care has been a cost-effective investment that helps respond to the physical and emotional problems of seniors and people with disabilities, allowing them to remain in their own communities and live independent, productive lives. It has saved the state hundreds of millions of dollars in health care costs related to hospitalization and institutionalization. A cornerstone of this nationally-recognized system is the comprehensive statewide system of home and community-based direct care workers who provide critical personal care and other support services for seniors and people with disabilities.

Through the development of a certification process, direct-care providers will have the opportunity to go through an upgraded and comprehensive basic training and receive a certification that they can be proud of; one that will allow for greater access and opportunities for career advancement and greater financial benefits within the long term care and/or health care arenas. It also helps to combat and potentially reverse the extraordinarily high turnover rates in long term care, particularly direct care.

The creation of a publicly accessible registry of direct care providers is a critical and exciting aspect of this legislation. With the boomer population exploding into the senior and disability communities, the need for the public to locate trained and

affordable caregivers has never been more important. The registry will help the public find needed care providers for their loved ones and help keep direct care workers fully employed providing needed services and supports to seniors and people with disabilities.

We urge you to pass SB 1556 to the Joint Ways and Means Committee.