

Submitter: Glenna Hayes
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure: SB1556

Hi my name is Glenna Hayes and I am the advocacy coordinator for both UCP Connections and UCP Mentors. Connections and Mentors are in-home support service brokerages that provides assistance to roughly 850 adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, their families, and their providers living and working in Multnomah and Clackamas Counties. We are writing to you in support of SB 1556. While we are in support of SB 1566 we also want to make sure we are building equity, inclusion and accessibility into the certification process being discussed with this legislation. Direct Care Providers of both home and community based services are vital to many individuals with disabilities that we support. We are currently going through a workforce crisis due to the lack of pay, trainings, career development and lack of support to help build a strong solid workforce for this community. There is already a certification process for Home Care Workers (HCWs) and Personal Support Workers (PSWs) through Department of Human Services (DHS), but there is no required centralized certification process for agencies or direct support professionals (DSPs). The current process is you passing a background check, taking a basic orientation, then required 12 hours of training, and 12 hours over 2 years of continued education to remain certified. However with the current certification process that exist with DHS for HCWs and PSWs it leaves many newly hired professionals left waiting long periods of time for their background checks to be approved (sometimes up to 3 months),and many providers waiting a minimum of a month before they are even getting paid, because of the wait times many workers end up moving onto other work outside the the field of direct supports. We also want to recognize that many individuals receive supports from family members who do not speak/read English and have different cultural backgrounds which guides the supports they provide. When building a certification process bringing in diverse cultural understandings on care will be vital, losing these diverse support providers could be detrimental to many individuals who receive supports. Ideally a certification process for all workers would help build a better foundational skill base for the work force, and opportunities for continued education that addresses the needs of both the provider and person receiving supports, we hope this will proper training will be included in SB 1556. This also ties in with the registry, that again already exist for HCWs and PSWs, but not agencies or DSPs and it is not meeting the needs that people with disabilities are currently facing. In our experience helping individuals find providers off the registry is very hit or miss. Not all the information is up to date or correct on the registry, it is not accessible for those who do not read (no video or visual options), and there are many times providers no call-no show to their interviews. A registry would be great, but if the current one is not working for the majority of individuals receiving services, how will this current legislation work

towards improving a registry system that has been around for up to 7+ years?

Thank you for your time and consideration of SB 1556. Here at UCP Connections & UCP Mentors we support a certification process that helps the expansion and on going personal-growth with providers and hope when this legislation passes you will look to the people receiving services and current workers on developing this certification process.