

Submitter: Marie-Jeanne Barter

On Behalf Of: Centers for Independent Living

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure: HB5026

Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, and Members of the Ways and Means Sub Committee on Human Services,

I provide written testimony to you today requesting your support on the Center for Independent Living (CIL) 2.6 million dollar Pay- Equity POP.

I currently serve as a part-time Independent Living Skills Specialist at Lane Independent Living Alliance (LILA). My first experiences with CIL services and philosophy came five years after sustaining major life-changing disabilities in a motor vehicle-pedestrian accident. I qualified for SSDI as I experienced significant mobility limitations, as well as a moderate brain injury. In addition, my rehabilitation required that I learn to live in recovery from alcohol abuse. I cannot minimize the impact of my first visit to a CIL. I learned that there is life after disability. Because of the peer support, advocacy, and independent living skills services I received, I was able to return to part-time work initially. As my confidence and work stamina improved, I achieved full-time employment and was able to become fully self-sufficient as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for Oregon.

I am currently retired from service with ODHS. During my tenure as a VR Counselor, I referred many consumers to LILA for job readiness skills training, peer support services, independent living skills acquisition, advocacy assistance with a variety of governmental and non-profit organizations, information and referral, and transition services. I watched many of these individuals blossom into self-sustaining members of their communities.

I now collect Oregon State retirement, Social Security retirement, and my part-time earnings as an ILS Specialist at LILA. Unfortunately, many of my co-workers struggle to pay their bills, as they do not have the supplemental retirement benefits that I have. I urge the committee to fund the 2.6 million- dollar request for CIL Pay Equity

Respectfully submitted,

Marie- Jeanne Barter, MSRC

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