

Submitter: Ralene WHITLOCK

On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB5026

Date: March 2, 2023

To: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Ralene Whitlock Parent of Adult Child receiving I/DD services

RE: SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Committee,:

My name is Ralene Whitlock, and I represent My son Jacob, a 20-year-old Developmentally Disabled adult child that receives services through the I/DD program in St. Helens, OR.

The services Jacob receives through I/DD program have been instrumental in his life. Without these services Jacob would not have the same opportunities that he has now. Jacob's I/DD caseworker has helped in not only Jacob's life but our family as a whole. She has helped us by advocating for Jacob's wellbeing.

Jacob and I first moved to St. Helens, Oregon in 2015, at that time we were homeless and stayed at the SAFE shelter of Columbia County. We had no home and felt completely hopeless. While staying at the shelter I herd about the I/DD program and began the process of getting Jacob approved for their program. This was when we met his caseworker Betty Bundy. Once approved Betty immediately began advocating for Jacob. After sometime of being homeless and working with several agencies in the area trying to find housing, My name had finally reached the top of the Housing Choice Voucher Program I had applied for 7 years earlier in Washington County. We were very excited yet a bit disappointed that we would have to relocate to Washington County and uproot Jacob from the services he had been receiving here. That's when Betty advocating for Jacob was able to convince the Housing Choice Voucher Program that Jacob's services he was receiving here were instrumental in his care. She is the reason we are still here in Columbia County now. Jacob has achieved so much here with her help. He finished high school and received his diploma, Jacob obtained his drivers license and is now working with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to one day find gainful employment and his goal is to start his own business. None of this would have been possible without Betty or the I/DD program and for that reason I ask that you support the funding being asked for.

Sincerely,

Ralene Whitlock