

Oregon Legislative Assembly

3/2/2023

Testify on HB5026 to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services.

Request: Support Pay Equity for Centers for Independent Living.

Testimony: Abilitree, Center for Independent Living.

Good morning, co-chairs & members of the committee.

I'm James Arciniega, representing Abilitree, a Central Oregon - Center for Independent Living. Abilitree covers Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook County.

Our organization has been in operation as a CIL since 1982.

Over 41 years, we have helped thousands of individuals with disabilities in the tri-county area.

Abilitree strongly urges supporting approval of the \$2.6 million CIL Pay Equity proposal.

Centers for Independent Living are unique, valuable, and diverse DHS programs.

They are programs for people with disabilities, developed and led by people with disabilities, with a purpose to take their lives into their own hands to improve circumstances for themselves and their community.

CILs provide people with disabilities the opportunity to experience self-empowerment - through services that expand their ability to - goal set, learn skills, network, advocate, and act - with the strong mentorship of disabled peers.

It is a pathway to access supports and services that, at its heart, gets what it means to have a disability.

The governing rules for CILs have been left broad and flexible to maximize the potential for creative problem solving. Each CIL is unique and driven by its community needs. Shaped by the incite of the disabled. Driven by listening, partnering, networking.

From our team working with the Central Oregon police to de-escalate a spiraling mental health situation avoiding jail, hospitalization, or death - to making break throughs with assistive technology for a disabled veterans to realize their potential - to helping seniors relocate from nursing rehab back into community housing, to furnishing someone's house by networking with donors.

CIL's can cover the gaps in services where other departments do not have the flexibility, creativity, or capacity to manage.

CIL's are information, networking, & advocacy champions of the disability community.

Though small from a total budget perspective, the impact and value of these programs should not be underestimated.

As you know, CIL funding is not currently equitable.

Funding has remained stagnant for the last 10 years.

Maintaining Pay Equity for CIL employees has reached a breaking point.

We hope that you will hear our message.

We are asking for Pay equity for CIL's.

We are asking for a sustainable future.

We are asking for the Disability community for the continued opportunity to help itself.

Please support CIL Pay Equity.

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