

Submitter: Muneeb Kalenandi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB492

Testimony Against SB 492

Thank you, Chairperson Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and the Senate Committee On Health Care, for giving me the opportunity to present my testimony on SD 492 today.

This bill would be devastating to many disabled Oregonians, such as myself, who live with conditions and chronic illnesses which are permanent and/or challenging to treat. We live with high pain levels, struggle with accomplishing basic daily tasks, and have quite challenging life situations. We are often living at very low-income levels, depending upon Medicaid programs, such as Oregon Health Plan, CareOregon, or CareOregon Advantage, for our healthcare coverage. Much of the care we receive, in order to simply be able to exist, could be categorized as "Quality of Life" care, rather than strictly "Medically Necessary."

I was disabled first by having severe and progressive scoliosis, which had me using a cane and then a walker by my mid-30s, with great difficulty walking. At age 40, I was in a car accident, which caused me to be unable to walk at all, requiring an electric wheelchair. At 42, I was struck by a car while in my wheelchair, causing me to be unable to even sit up for more than 30 minutes without excruciating pain. The damage to my spine is progressive and has led to a loss of several inches in height, due to disintegration.

To be able to exist in this world, I require pain management, which enables me to live at a baseline of 6 out of 10 on the pain scale. I have depression and trauma-related mental health disorders, for which I take medication, including sleep disorders. I also rely on in-home caregiving. My providers cook, do basic housekeeping, accompany me to appointments, assist in medication management, and generally help me be able to be a human being. My medical equipment includes a power wheelchair, which requires maintenance and repairs; a hospital bed, as I am in bed 95% of my life; and railing[s] for the bath and toilet, among other items. All of this medical care falls under "Quality of Life" and could be slashed under SB 492.

Quite frankly, if SB 492 became law, and I lost these aspects of my medical care, my life would no longer be sustainable, and I would not be alone. 25% of Americans will face disability at some point in their lives. I would have no choice but to end my life. But maybe that is the intention of the bill? Simply eliminating the disabled from society?

I strongly urge you to support healthcare for disabled Oregonians and vote NO on SB 492.

Thank you again, Chairperson Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and the Senate Committee On Health Care, for allowing me to present my testimony on SB 492 today.