

To: Ways and Means Committee

From:Carolynn Kohout

Date: April 8, 2023

RE: Ways and Mean Roadshow 2023 - Portland

Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolynn Kohout. For 22 years I have been a homecare worker, personal care attendant, and personal support worker in Hillsboro, Oregon.

I strongly support the Co-Chairs' budget that allocates \$65 million for homecare, personal care attendants, and personal support workers to provide us \$25 per hour to keep up with inflation and make our jobs competitive. Note: Independent employment agencies are paid \$42 per hour per worker, which is disturbing.

I care for some of Oregon's most vulnerable residents.

I am happy to do housework: laundry, clean bathrooms, wash dishes, dust, vacuum, etc., personal care: dressing, feeding, bathing, toileting, getting consumers into and out of wheelchairs and to and from bed, administer medications; do physical and speech therapies; keep developmentally disabled and stroke victims learning, exercising, and occupied; occupy individuals who have dementia issues.

I enable a homebound individual to live self-sufficiently: do laundry, clean his bathroom and kitchen, etc.; for an addictions and mental health consumer: I heal with lymphatic and deep tissue massage, handle angry, short "fuse"-related meltdowns, help him organize his many, diverse, and long-held possessions, motivate him to do necessary projects in my presence and absence, keep his kitchen clean, and fold laundry.

I have had frustrations with being paid for fewer hours than I have worked – being treated like a servant, not an employee. I am forced to choose between paying rent or putting food on my table.

There is no good system to locate a respite worker when I am sick or need a day off. I am outraged that I cannot find a new consumer without working for a private agency. That the Registry and Referral Service does not function to find a consumer.

There are too few case managers, resulting in their being overworked and overwhelmed.

My ask:

- fund major caregiving investment; enable us to recruit new caregivers for your future.
- Fund improvements to broken state systems at ODHS.
- Support the Governor's recommendation to use all available resources to invest in programs now and avoid harmful, system-destroying cuts.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story today.

Carolynn Kohout