

Testimony in support of the Budget Request for Long Term Care (SB 5506)
by Jim McConnell
to Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Saturday, April 8, 2023
Portland Community College PAC Auditorium, Sylvania Campus

My name is Jim McConnell. I live in SE Portland. I'm here today on behalf of The Campaign for Oregon Seniors and Persons with Disabilities. We are a diverse alliance of organizations. Our mission is to ensure Oregon's long term care system protects and supports the independence, dignity, and choice of each person.

The Campaign urges approval of the budget request for Long Term Care supports and services. The budget supports a continuum of care that enables people to live in the least restrictive settings, including their own homes and communities, for as long as possible.

Today we support the requested funding levels for:

- The caseload projections for the 2023-25 Biennium along with an Emergency Board reserve.
- Funding the Essential Worker Healthcare Trust that provides health insurance benefits for the thousands of Long Term Care workers
- Adjusted reimbursement rates for providers (nursing facilities, assisted living, etc.), and adjusted wages for Long Term Care workers.
- An appropriation of \$65 million for improved wages and benefits for homecare workers.
- Increased capacity for the Public Guardian Program and the Long Term Care Ombudsman program.

We also urge inclusion of one addition not in the proposed budget. Due to the ongoing shortage of homecare workers, we urge retention of the 15% rate add-on for that workforce that was provided during COVID.

Our Campaign is united in saying that an across-the-board cut in state funds, along with the federal cuts in Medicaid, would severely limit our ability to assure the safety and well-being of the very fragile population that we serve.

We urge that the Joint Ways and Means committee recommend passage of the Long Term Care budget request with our additional add-on for homecare workers.