

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure: SB1521

To the Esteemed Members of the Senate Committee On Human Services,

I am writing to express my unwavering support for Senate Bill 1521, a legislative proposal that stands as a beacon of progress in our ongoing struggle to ensure the rights and welfare of some of our society's most vulnerable members: the elderly and individuals with disabilities. This bill, in recognizing and addressing the critical need for adequate staffing in residential care facilities, embodies the core principles of progressivism—solidarity, equality, and the collective responsibility we share for the well-being of every individual.

For too long, our society has allowed the market to dictate the conditions under which care is provided to those in need, often at the expense of the quality of care and the dignity of those receiving it. By mandating the use of acuity-based staffing tools, SB 1521 takes a significant step towards ensuring that staffing levels in residential care facilities are determined by the actual needs of residents—both scheduled and unscheduled—thereby prioritizing human need over profit.

Moreover, the bill's expansion of the definition of "child in care" to include a broader spectrum of children under the protective custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is a commendable move towards a more inclusive and protective framework for child welfare. This change acknowledges the complex and varied needs of children in care, ensuring that they are afforded the protection and support they deserve, regardless of their specific circumstances.

The declaration of an emergency and the bill's immediate effect upon passage underscore the urgency of these issues. Every day without these changes is a day in which our fellow Oregonians may not receive the care and protection they need and deserve. It is a day in which we fail to live up to our collective responsibility to care for one another, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

I believe that it is our duty to build a society that prioritizes the well-being of all its members over the interests of a few. SB 1521 represents a step towards that society, ensuring that care facilities operate not as businesses first, but as homes—places where the needs of residents are met with compassion and competence, and where every child is given the protection and care they need to thrive.

I urge you to support SB 1521, not just as a piece of legislation, but as a commitment to the values of justice, equality, and solidarity. Let us show that in Oregon, we stand

together to ensure that everyone, regardless of age or ability, is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Sincerely,  
Devon Lawson-McCourt