

Submitter: Jim Davis
On Behalf Of: Or St Cn for Retired Citizens-United Seniors of Or
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure: HB4129

Support of HB 4129, Homecare Modernization Act

I am Dr. Jim Davis, representing the Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens and United Seniors of Oregon, state affiliates of the National Council on Aging. We want to express our strong support for HB 4129, which offers APD/DHS homecare service recipients a new homecare option entitled "Agency with Choice," which will provide home care workers with a more person-centered option that increases choice and can be more efficiently managed, leading to higher quality care and better job opportunities.

Although the state Aging and People with Disabilities/ODHS system is considered a national model for in-home and community-based long term care, striving to provide the most independent and dignified living environment for seniors and persons with disabilities, it is in the midst of a serious caregiver workforce shortage - as are most other care provision professions – causing thousands in need of long term care statewide to be unable to find a caregiver.

There are numerous problems that homecare workers are facing. Many deal with late, and sometimes inaccurate, pay amounts. Caregivers are likely to live pay check to pay check and could end up having to make critical life choices around rent, groceries, etc. In addition, caregivers need a centralized place to seek support and assistance, especially in finding new clients.

These hurdles for senior/disability caregivers can greatly affect the care of senior and/or disability clients seeking assistance within a workforce shortage, and it can also potentially cause caregivers to seek other employment and/or career opportunities. Homecare workers need job security, with opportunities to build a rewarding career in care provision. The need for care providers will only expand as the senior and disability populations continue to grow exponentially.

We urge strong legislative support for the modernization of the APD homecare worker's system for client placement and provider assistance and support through the Agency with Choice option. Please support HB 4129.