

Submitter: Patrick Hennessy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB4129

To Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

My name is Patrick Hennessy and I am a critical care nurse living in Portland, Oregon. I am submitting testimony in SUPPORT of HB 4129. Homecare workers play an important, yet underrecognized, role in our healthcare system. Before my father passed away, the traumatic brain injury he suffered as a teenager progressed into a severe disability that limited his ability to walk and care for himself. He benefited from the services of professional homecare workers. He needed assistance with everything from using the bathroom to eating his meals. Towards the end of his life, all my father wanted was to live at home. This was important not only to him but also my family. Because of the limitations placed on his body he was not able to do much but enjoy simple pleasures like sitting in his “comfy chair,” watching the birds and squirrels in his back yard, or rooting for his favorite football teams on television. Without the attention and assistance from homecare workers, this would have been impossible. It was so meaningful to me and my family to watch the interactions that homecare workers had with my father. They made him smile, they made him laugh, and most importantly they made him feel safe and respected when he felt the most helpless.

At the hospital, I see patients who could have benefited from a homecare worker. These patients ended up in the hospital due to a preventable fall. They developed wounds or infections from a lack of hygiene care or regular meals. Homecare workers keep the most vulnerable in our communities out of the emergency rooms and in the safety and comfort of their own homes.

HB 4129 aims to ease the administrative burden on homecare workers so that they can focus on caring for their clients. Staff turnover due to pay or scheduling was a common challenge with finding care for my father. If this bill will help make it easier for homecare workers to do their jobs and improve satisfaction and retention, then we owe it to the thousands of Oregonians who depend on homecare workers to live at home with dignity. Please support HB 4129 and thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Patrick Hennessy