

Submitter: Daniel Cogan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB538

My 16 year-old son has developmental disabilities and very high behavioral health needs. It has been very difficult to find caregivers/PSWs/DSPs to work with my son because of the challenging work and low pay. As a result, it has been extremely stressful to hold a job and be a caregiver for my son at the same time and to do so for many years. This stress has taken a mental toll on my wife and me. We rarely have gone on vacations as a couple or a family because our son is unable to be safe in vacation-type environments. This is one example of the narrow lives we have to lead having to care for our son and hold down jobs. Offering pay to families like mine would give families a little flexibility to decide if they want a caregiver or to do the work themselves. I have not had that flexibility for years having to hold a full-time job and then come home and take care of my child seven days a week all year long.

Many other states provide this option to parents. Oregon has not and it has taken a toll on my family and I am sure countless others. Legislators, rightly so, will worry about the cost of this proposal. Whatever the cost is, be aware that if it is not funded that lives will continue to be significantly impacted by the toll of trying to hold a job and then coming home to work taking care of your child. I implore you to pass this bill to bring a little sanity to the lives of parents raising children who have developmental disabilities and very high behavioral health needs.