

RE: SB 810

Directs the Department of Human Services to collaborate with the Department of Education to increase opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities to obtain and advance in competitive integrated employment.

I worked as a Personal Agent at a Support Services Brokerage in Washington County and also worked as a Sr. Services Coordinator at Washington County Health & Human Services Developmental Disabilities program. Additionally, I am a parent of a now deceased young woman who experienced cerebral palsy and a seizure disorder.

In my experience, individuals with developmental disabilities want to be productive and successful employees who earn income just as their peers without disabilities. They need help to do this. They need assistance from trained, skilled and reliable employment providers.

While they are in the school setting, they need more than just babysitting or adult day care programs. They need programs using best practices to help them identify their strengths and interests, and that teach the skills that will make them successful at their jobs.

These individuals also need programs where providers and staff set meaningful goals for students and clients, track their progress and are accountable for meeting each individual's measurable goals.

The staff who will be providing the day to day supports for these individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities must be compensated adequately to ensure there is not high turnover and that schools and other provider agencies and groups can compete with other employers to attract and keep high quality support staff.

During my time working with individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, I never heard a client say they did not want to work and I saw some, especially those with consistent and meaningful supports, become productive employees. I also heard from the employers who hired them that they felt they and their businesses had benefited as much or more than the person getting the job.

Success doesn't happen by accident. Senate Bill 810 confirms the plan by the State of Oregon to promote meaningful employment for any and all individuals who want to work.

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