



January 29, 2025

To: Senator Gelser Blouin, Chair, Senate Committee on Human Services  
From: Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition  
RE: Senate Bill 810 (Support)

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To Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 30 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity, and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Our members include the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (a statewide coalition of people with IDD or “self-advocates”), peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations, and developmental disability providers and the DD Act Network Partners.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to work in integrated job settings that pay equal wages for similar work. Oregon phased out paying people with I/DD less than the minimum wage and shuttered sheltered workshops, because we believe minimum wage is a universal floor and people with IDD should work in places where they can work alongside people without disabilities in the community.<sup>1</sup> The DD Coalition supports Senate Bill 810, because those values are clearly reflected in proposed legislation that further enshrines the Employment First initiative into Oregon law. Employment First is a policy that states that community jobs are the priority in planning employment services for working-age adults with IDD.

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about what the closing of sheltered workshops and ending of subminimum wages has meant to Oregonians with disabilities, please refer to the compelling testimony provided by Gabrielle Guedon, Executive Director of the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (OSAC), with respect to Senate Bill 494 (2019) and listen to her experiences available here (beginning at timestamp 18:29): <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/mediaplayer?clientID=4879615486&eventID=2019021147&startStreamAt=1109&stopStreamAt=1353>



While closing sheltered workshops and ending subminimum wages are notable accomplishments for which Oregonians may be proud, more work is needed to increase opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Despite those successes, individuals with IDD face much higher unemployment rates and lower labor-force participation compared to those without disabilities.

The principles that Employment First promotes have created a positive trajectory of job creation for those receiving services through programs such as the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS). Since 2015, the number of clients receiving competitive integrated employment services through ODDS has grown from 577 in 2015 to 1,948 in 2024.<sup>2</sup> That progress is a hallmark of the kinds of improvements that SB 810 will continue to advance. As a result, Oregonians with IDD will have increased economic independence, more choices, and greater inclusion in their communities.

To maintain the state's positive trajectory, we must continue to analyze key metrics toward competitive integrated employment for persons with IDD and to assist ODHS and ODDS to improve those metrics. To that end, SB 810 will require an annual report that may include such things as:

- The number of individuals with IDD receiving services from ODDS;
- The wages of those engaged in integrated employment services;
- The number of hours worked per week by those individuals;
- The quantity, quality, and recruitment of employment service provider agencies who help people with IDD get or keep a job;
- The progress of Vocational Rehabilitation in realizing Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) for people with IDD.

The Employment First Advisory Committee that SB 810 creates will bring together persons with lived experience, policy advisors, cross-agency representatives, employment service providers, case management, and other community

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<sup>2</sup> Oregon Department of Human Services. "Oregon's Employment First Outcomes Report (November 2024)," p 2. Available at <https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/employment-first/Documents/ef-outcomes-successes-2024-11.pdf>



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partners. Together, they will review employment outcomes, make policy and budget recommendations around workforce planning, and help implement local regional strategies to promote competitive integrated employment. Greater collaboration between the Department of Human Services and Department of Education under SB 810 will also improve access to community employment opportunities.

SB 810 is an opportunity to maintain over a decade of momentum toward workforce equity for persons with IDD in the state of Oregon. For the above reasons, the DD Coalition supports Senate Bill 810 and urges you to pass this important piece of legislation to advance employment for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.