



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Human Services

Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation



January 30, 2025

Chair Sara Gelser Blouin
Senate Committee on Human Services
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 810. This legislation will ensure Oregon continues to prioritize competitive integrated employment for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), building on a decade of work.

Oregon is considered an Employment First state, meaning competitive integrated employment, or CIE, is the first and priority option when supporting a person with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or I/DD. The Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Disabilities Services and Vocational Rehabilitation, along with Oregon Department of Education, coordinate to ensure seamless delivery of employment services for job seekers with I/DD.

Our own Employment First policy statements express our belief that people with I/DD should earn the same wages as their peers and should work alongside their peers in community. We believe this provides the dignity and respect people with disabilities deserve. When people with disabilities are employed, they have more money, more choices, and more involvement in their communities.

Before 2013, many people with I/DD worked in isolated groups, doing menial jobs and earning below minimum wage. People who are now working and advancing in their careers were previously denied employment services for being determined “too disabled to work.”

In 2013, a class action lawsuit, *Lane v. Brown*, claimed Oregon violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by segregating workers with I/DD.

Oregon closed all sheltered workshops in 2020 and the *Lane v. Brown* lawsuit was successfully resolved in June 2022. Oregon’s Office of Developmental Disabilities (ODDS), Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Oregon Department of Education worked together to help former

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workshop employees find community jobs with real wages. The number of Oregonians with I/DD who are working in competitive integrated jobs has more than tripled since 2015.

However, there is still more work to do. Only 37% of people with I/DD who want to work have a plan to get a job (Source: National Core Indicators, 2022-2023).

This proposed legislation will ensure we can continue to build on the progress made over the past decade and support pathways to competitive integrated employment for everyone with disabilities who wants to work.

SB 810 would codify the requirements from past executive orders, the *Lane v. Brown* settlement agreement, and existing Oregon Administrative Rules, all of which are necessary to ensure Oregon's Employment First policies continue to be successfully implemented.

It will formalize existing oversight, enforcement, and program mechanisms that have been in place since 2015. These requirements were developed with community partners, including self-advocates, whose voices are crucial.

Perhaps most importantly, SB 810 will ensure that the investments and progress we have already made can continue to support job seekers with I/DD to obtain and advance in competitive integrated employment.

Sincerely,



Dana Hittle
Interim Director
Office of Developmental Disabilities Services



Keith Ozols
Director
Vocational Rehabilitation