



Mission: FACT Oregon empowers families, youth, and communities to navigate disability systems, advocating together for disability justice and policy change so that people with disabilities have what they need to thrive at home, in school, and in their communities.

February 3, 2025

Chair Deb Patterson

Vice-Chair Cedric Hayden

Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

Support for SB 538 – Requires the Department of Human Services to pay parents to provide attendant care services for children with developmental disabilities who have very high behavioral health or medical needs.

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and Members of the Committee,

FACT Oregon is a family-led statewide nonprofit that empowers families, youth, and communities to navigate disability systems, advocating together for disability justice and policy change so that people with disabilities have what they need to thrive at home, in school, and in their communities. Since 2012, we have served as the state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) for special education. Additionally, since 2009, we have supported families with intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) as a Family Network currently serving Multnomah and Washington counties.

All children in Oregon should have the support they need to thrive. Children with intellectual or developmental disabilities should have access to the home- and community-based supports that Oregon provides so they can thrive.

FACT Oregon affirms that disability is a natural part of life, and every person has the right to a self-determined future. Parents and caregivers play a critical role in a child's early years, supporting their development, fostering advocacy skills, and ensuring access to essential services that promote independence.

Yet, for some families in Oregon, the support their children need to thrive and achieve a life of self-determination is extraordinary. Whether due to significant behavioral or medical needs, some children with disabilities require care that goes far beyond that typically expected of a parent for a minor child. The care these children need is highly specialized attendant and/or medical care and requires qualified providers. Unfortunately, these families struggle to hire, train, and retain enough qualified care providers so they become default, unpaid providers to make up that gap.

However, for some Oregon families, the level of care their children require is extraordinary. Children with high behavioral or medical needs require skilled, consistent care that goes well beyond typical parenting responsibilities. The reality is that families struggle to find and retain qualified care providers. When the workforce cannot meet demand, parents are left as the only viable caregivers—uncompensated and without relief. The level of care required can amount to hundreds of additional hours each month, leading to many parents leaving the workforce and enduring financial instability.

SB 538 provides a critical solution by ensuring parents of children with very high behavioral or medical needs can be compensated for the care they already provide. This targeted approach recognizes both the specialized care required and the ongoing caregiver workforce shortage that leaves families without options.

By passing SB 538, Oregon acknowledges the critical role of parent caregivers, ensuring that families are supported in providing the high level of care their children need to thrive.

Thank you,

Christy Reese, Executive Director, FACT Oregon