

Submitter: Advocates For Disability Supports
On Behalf Of: Ellen Buford
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB538

Dear Lawmakers, As a paid caregiver who has been in the field since college, I would like to ask you to vote yes on Senate Bill 538, also known as Tensy's Law. The bill would increase access to Oregon's Children's Extraordinary Needs (CEN) waiver; allow parents of minors to be personal support workers; and ensure this compensation comes from already-obligated funding. As a professional caregiver myself I can confirm that there is an active workforce crisis in my field and parents being allowed to be paid caregivers is the only humane choice for these children. If parents cannot get paid, they must leave their children in someone else's care and go to work to make the money their family needs to survive. This leads to higher stress, higher rates of divorce in disability families, and ultimately worse outcomes for the children who need our love and support the most. Oregon's homecare workforce shortage is well-documented. Over 90% of families report they cannot find enough caregivers to fill their authorized hours. This shortage is even more severe in rural areas, where specialized caregivers are virtually nonexistent. Tensy's Law prioritizes what truly matters: the well-being of Oregon's most vulnerable children. Thank you for your consideration. Ellen