

Submitter: John Saito  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB538

My name is John Saito, and I am the parent and guardian to my daughter Jamie (Yui) who has profound autism. I am writing in strong support of SB538. People like Yui suffer the most from the IDD caregiver crisis in Oregon, and this bill will provide invaluable relief to the many families of children with similarly high needs.

Yui is one of over 3,400 Oregonians who suffer from profound autism; comprising roughly 27% of the entire autistic population. Those with profound autism also suffer from profound intellectual disability, minimal to no comprehensible language, mood, and anxiety disorders, and are prone to self-harm and aggression. People like Yui require 24-hour vigilant monitoring, and continuous access to 1:1 skilled direct care for all their basic needs (toileting, dressing, bathing, nutrition, personal safety, etc.).

While Yui has qualified for close to 18 hours a day of in-home caregiving, we have been unable to find enough caregivers to fill 10-15 hours per week. This is not for lack of trying. We have engaged 11 different caregiver agencies, and have directly contacted and interviewed many candidates directly through the OHCC job "marketplace" for caregivers (CARINA). Of the few caregivers we have found, all required significant training by us on a wide variety of challenges including communication, social interaction, and behavioral supports (prevention, safety, de-escalation, etc.). It often took weeks or months for the new caregiver to become comfortable and capable enough to be left alone with Yui. In addition, we've encountered numerous candidate caregivers who were far from professional and treated their responsibilities as "jobs of last resort." Poor time management. Bare minimum completion of tasks. Etc.

SB538 is an important countermeasure to this caregiver crisis we face. It enables families to provide the quality of care their disabled children deserve without putting their very financial stability at even greater risk. I fully support this bill, and encourage you to get it passed. Thank you.