

Submitter: Ashley Wells
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB538

February 4, 2025

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the Committee,
For the record, my name is Ashley Wells, and I am here today in support of Senate Bill 538.

As you know, during the Covid 19 pandemic, parents were temporarily allowed to be paid care providers for their children under 18. All across the County, State, and Country, families were positively impacted by being able to be paid care providers for their own children, in numerous ways. (Being able to be home and address their children's needs, without losing out on wages, for example).

Last year, the Children's Extensive Needs (CEN) waiver was introduced and passed in Oregon, but unfortunately, only a small amount of families that desperately need this change were able to be picked from a lottery. There are still hundreds, even thousands of families who deserve this waiver as well. Having children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and those that have high medical or behavioral needs, is extremely taxing on families who work outside of the home. There has been a shortage of personal support workers (PSW) and direct support professional (DSP) for years now. Not only that, but many people that are hired are undertrained and inexperienced.

Parents and primary caregivers know our kids better than anyone. It makes no sense to hire a stranger off the street, who doesn't even have to pass a drug test, to come into your home and care for your high needs child, when the parents or caregivers are already equipped to do so. The funding is already in place for care providers, so why not make it legal for the best care providers to access these funds, while also allowing the best provider for the child. This should be a slam-dunk, no-brainer. Your support is greatly appreciated, and needed!

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,
Ashley Wells
Roseburg, Oregon