

Submitter: Alicia Bodine  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB538

My name is Alicia Bodine. I am a single mom to an amazing little girl named Zoë who is 10 years old. We live in Dallas, Oregon and I am writing in support of SB 538 "Tensy's Law".

Zoë has Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, and was recently referred to the Autism clinic for an Evaluation. She is cognitively around 18 months old. She is completely non verbal and cannot walk unassisted.

She spent 10 days on life support and As a baby, her doctors did not want her in daycare due to her health, which meant I could not work. Later, She did 1 1/2 years of preschool but she spent more time at home sick than she did at school because she caught every illness that kids came in with. I chose to homeschool her during covid even when schools reopened because our school district will not allow 1:1 aids due to a loophole they found.

We live with my mom because my only "income" is child support. Zoë does not qualify for SSI because of the child support she receives.

Zoe used to say 4 words and 30 signs. She waved hello and goodbye, she could blow kisses and interacted with people well. She was also almost potty trained. Unfortunately at age 4, she had an injury that took all her communication, social interacting skills, and potty trained skills.

We had a DSP for Zoë for sorry time, and Zoë's anxiety skyrocketed. She started to panic any time I left the room even we were around family.

When I needed to go to the store, I would get phone calls or texts asking about her care. And I could only find someone for 3-10 hours a week at most, Or they would cancel because of other obligations. Any illness with the DSP and Zoë would get sick. A head cold can turn into a 6 week illness with rounds of antibiotics, urgent care and doctor visits, sometimes even needing the hospital. Once my mom retired she was able to cover more hours, but still not enough that I could work.

When applying for assistance in the past I was actually told by a state worker that Zoë didn't qualify because I do not "contribute to society".

Then parent pay started. It was perfect timing because my mom had to become my unvle's caregiver which meant less hours that she could help me with Zoë. During that time, I was able to get off of food stamps and I started being able to pay for gas to take her on more outings or to attend more therapies. I was able to buy her equipment that insurance denies. And because there were not a lot of people coming through the house, Zoë had not had to be admitted to the hospital and was hardly sick at all. Her doctors and therapists were so happy that her body was not constantly sick.

Her anxiety and PTSD is Down because she has routine and knows she is safe. No

one knows her gestures, sounds or eye contact like I do. And Although she is non verbal, she prefers to have me help her with things than someone else. Once covid ended, so did paid parent. I was still not able to send her to school and we were back in the same position as before with getting back on food stamps. SB 538 would benefit almost 2 thousand families who are in similar or harder circumstances than myself. This is not about wanting to get rich. This is about getting compensation for a job that you will pay literally anyone else for. More importantly, it would help Oregon's vulnerable children physically and mentally. Our children only qualify for hours based on their needs which are above and beyond what a typical parent would need to do. We know our children best. Our children know that they are safe with us. The money that they make and taxes we pay would then be going back into our economy so we can "contribute to society" and help our children flourish in a world where they and their families have to fight to be included at every turn. Please fulfill your promises to these families by passing SB-538

Sincerely,  
Alicia Bodine