



February 11, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 136

To: Senate Committee on Human Services

Chair Gelser Blouin, Members of the Committee,

SEIU represents thousands of personal support workers and direct support professionals who support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live fulfilling and meaningful lives in their communities.

These critical services are funded almost, if not entirely, by Medicaid. This gives the State significant interest in safeguarding their investment and ensuring that the providers they entrust with supporting Oregonians are not engaging in fraudulent, abusive, or unlawful practices. This bill would clarify the reasons for exclusion and lengthen the period during which Medicaid providers may be barred from offering services, which strengthens Oregon's ability to hold providers accountable and maintain the integrity of Medicaid-funded programs.

Over the years, SEIU has consistently advocated for greater oversight of private providers who receive Medicaid dollars. This advocacy stems from a fundamental belief that everyone – individuals receiving services, the workers who support them, the public, and the legislature – should be reassured that these valuable services are provided to as many people as possible, and that there isn't fraud or waste. Unfortunately, the lack of robust enforcement tools has, in certain cases, allowed providers to continue operating despite serious violations.

We believe Senate Bill 136 builds on the important work of this body and this Committee specifically by explicitly giving the Department of Human Services direction and clarity regarding what violations warrant suspension, the length of time for those suspensions, and additional circumstances that warrant further oversight and accountability measures. Without adequate regulatory authority, unscrupulous providers can continue exploiting the system and putting these valuable services at risk.

It is imperative that Oregon has the necessary tools to maintain public trust in Medicaid programs. SB 136 provides these tools, enabling the state to act decisively and effectively against providers who breach ethical or legal standards.

I urge you to support SB 136 and take this vital step toward ensuring a more accountable, transparent, and protective Medicaid system.

Sincerely,

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