



February 12, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Hannah Rarick

Dear Chair Senator Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Senator Linthicum, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

I am providing this testimony in support of SB 20.

I became paralyzed in 2018. I became a full time wheelchair user and dependent upon Medicaid for my many medical necessities and long term in home care. Even faced with all the challenges that come with my disability, I am still passionate about the work that I do as a Community Health Worker with Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection. Because I am someone who works directly with the disabled community, I see first hand (more often than I'd like) the conflict medicaid users face deciding between a fulfilling well compensated profession and being able to just survive under a wage cap. Passing SB20 will allow some of the most vulnerable members of our society to be paid fairly for the work they want to do, advance in their careers, all while maintaining necessary services that keep them alive.

The wage allowances are based on outdated numbers that have not grown with cost of living. I myself had to decline a cost-of-living-adjustment so as to not risk the health benefits I receive. My wages barely cover rent and utilities and are barely above what I would receive with SSI.

Studies have shown that fulfilling employment can increase quality of life which in turn strengthens mental and physical health.

Thank you for taking the time to hear the testimonies from so many of us ready for an update in this outdated system. We are looking forward to having the ability to contribute to society without fear of life threatening repercussions.

Thank you!

Hannah Rarick
Community Health Worker
Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection

