

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Lithicum, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

My name is Aleksander Ferguson, and I am writing in support of SB 20, which will allow **Oregonians with disabilities to work, maintain private insurance, and remain eligible for Medicaid coverage** for their health care and long-term supports and services (LTSS) needs which covers specialized services not covered by typical insurers at an affordable rate.

The current income and asset limits in place mean that Oregonians with disabilities must make less than \$18 an hour and have no more than \$5,000 in total savings and assets. This means that Oregonians with disabilities cannot afford things like first and last month's rent, a surprise car payment, or many other basic necessities.

SB 20 will allow the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to remove the restrictive income and asset Medicaid eligibility caps for the Employed People with Disabilities (EPD) program. This will allow employed Oregonians with disabilities to pursue career growth that supports health and well-being; people with disabilities will be able to make money to pursue their goals, plan for retirement, engage in family planning, and achieve greater independence.

I'm requesting that the Senate Human Services Committee support this legislation because I am a disabled person in the workplace and pay an average of \$600/month for direct healthcare costs just for myself. This is more than many of my able-bodied peers have in medical expenses per month by several hundred dollars. It makes it difficult for me to afford saving to move and impossible to save for a house. I worry about what I will do if my car breaks down because so much of my wages goes towards my healthcare. I am not currently on Medicaid because I make more than the per hour limit, but if this bill passes I would qualify. With the passage of this bill into law, it could significantly lower the amount I need to spend on healthcare and medications each month and allow me upward mobility in society in the form of the chance to save up for more stable housing that better meets my needs.

Please support SB 20. It will create employment equity for Oregonians with disabilities that ushers in new pathways to prosperity, innovation, and health for Oregon's disabled community.

Thank you!
Aleksander Ferguson
Portland, OR