

Submitter: Janis Petrowski
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB20

Dear Senator Gelser Blouin, Representative Nosse, and Senator Broadman:

I am writing in strong support of the Disability Health & Employment Equity Coalition of Oregon's efforts to create equity for workers with disabilities, specifically regarding the proposed changes to the Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD) program. I understand this involves eliminating the income and resource eligibility thresholds for the program, as addressed in previous legislative sessions (SB584 - 2021, SB576 - 2023). The current EPD program, with its restrictive income and asset limits, creates a significant barrier for Oregonians with disabilities seeking to advance their careers and achieve financial independence. It forces individuals to choose between essential healthcare benefits and career advancement, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and dependence. As a concerned citizen as well as Advisor at Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection, I believe this is unacceptable. Removing the income and resource limits will empower individuals with disabilities to pursue meaningful employment (including OSCI staff members), contribute to our economy, and improve their overall well-being. This change will not only benefit individuals with disabilities but also strengthen our communities and reduce the long-term burden on the State. Allowing individuals to work, earn, save, and access employer-sponsored health insurance while retaining access to vital long-term supports and services is a win-win for everyone. I urge you to support this crucial policy change and help create a more equitable and inclusive Oregon.

Sincerely,
Janis Petrowski