

Submitter: Margaret Henry  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2448

Dear Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2448, which seeks to increase high-cost disability grants for individuals with disabilities in our state. This essential legislation addresses the urgent needs of a vulnerable population that often faces significant financial challenges due to the high costs associated with managing disabilities.

According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, nearly 500,000 Oregonians live with a disability, and many of these individuals encounter additional expenses that surpass their income capabilities (Oregon DHS, 2022). The current grant amounts do not adequately reflect the rising costs of medical care, assistive devices, and necessary accommodations, which are critical for individuals with disabilities to maintain their independence and quality of life.

Research shows that people with disabilities often experience poverty at higher rates than their non-disabled peers. The National Disability Institute (NDI) reports that 28% of individuals with disabilities live below the federal poverty level, compared to 12% of those without disabilities (NDI, 2020). This disparity is exacerbated by the high costs of healthcare, which can consume a significant portion of an individual's income. Increasing disability grants can alleviate some of this financial burden, allowing individuals to access necessary services without sacrificing basic needs such as food and housing.

Furthermore, House Bill 2448 aligns with the principles of equity and inclusion. By increasing these grants, we affirm our commitment to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities for success and participation in society as everyone else. The additional funds will empower individuals to seek the necessary resources for education, employment, and community engagement, ultimately benefiting the entire state through increased productivity and reduced reliance on state-funded support systems.

Moreover, a study by the National Council on Disability (NCD) highlights that investing in disability support services yields significant economic benefits by enabling individuals to contribute to the economy. For every dollar spent on disability-related support, there is a return on investment when individuals participate more fully in the workforce (NCD, 2021). By increasing high-cost disability grants, we not only support individuals in their daily lives but also strengthen our economy by promoting workforce participation.

Opponents may argue about the fiscal implications of increasing these grants; however, it is crucial to consider the long-term savings associated with improved health outcomes and reduced dependence on emergency services. A study from the American Journal of Public Health found that individuals with disabilities who receive

adequate financial support experience better health outcomes, resulting in lower healthcare costs over time (AJPH, 2019).

In conclusion, House Bill 2448 is an essential piece of legislation that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of many Oregonians with disabilities. By increasing high-cost disability grants, we can reduce poverty, promote equity, and foster a more inclusive society. I urge you to support this bill and take a significant step towards ensuring that all Oregonians have the resources they need to thrive.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

References:

Oregon Department of Human Services. (2022). Disability Services Overview.

National Disability Institute. (2020). The Financial Condition of People with Disabilities.

National Council on Disability. (2021). Economic Impact of Disability Support Services.

American Journal of Public Health. (2019). The Cost of Ignoring Disability Support in Healthcare.