



February 18, 2025

Matt Serres, Policy Director
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RE: Testimony to Senate Committee on Human Services for Senate Bill 20
(Neutral)

To Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) works to create change so that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) can live full lives as valued members of their communities. Oregonians with disabilities face a tough choice between working or keeping Medicaid Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS). Senate Bill 20 would allow more Oregonians to work, receive employer-provided benefits, and remain eligible for LTSS.

The Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD) program is one of several work incentives under the “Ticket to Work” program. The “Ticket to Work” program is composed of several work incentives designed to help people with disabilities return to work, gain independence, and improve their financial security. One of the primary concerns of people with disabilities who want to work is the potential loss of critical healthcare coverage through Medicaid. The EPD program helps people with disabilities work and earn income without losing Medicaid coverage.

In speaking with self-advocate John Merrick Russel, he highlighted three things pertaining to work incentives:

- People with disabilities should be able to engage in full-time work without the worry of immediately losing Medicaid benefits.



- The EPD program is one of several “means-tested” benefits like the Adult Disabled Child benefit that currently goes away if you earn just a little bit too much.
- Social Security beneficiaries are typically limited to one “Ticket to Work” with a finite duration for their lifetime, restricting access to employment support at different times.

Eliminating EPD asset and income eligibility limits is only one piece to the puzzle of ensuring those with I/DD the greatest opportunity to work. OCDD encourages Committee members to speak with Mr. Russell directly to learn more about these and other issues related to work incentives for people with disabilities.

OCDD also encourages the Committee members to listen to the testimony of Eric Thompson, whose video testimony is available in the record.¹ Eric is an individual with Autism who lives in Medford. He is an author, a marathon runner, and a leader of the Jackson County Self-Advocates. He has also worked for Rogue Valley Credit Union for eight years and as a mail carrier for 7 years prior.

The EPD program allowed Mr. Thompson to have a job coach who assisted him with workplace integration, skill development to maintain his job, and ongoing guidance. The Medicaid benefits also gave him access to services that helped him to develop the skills necessary to live independently in his own home. Individuals with significant earnings buy into Medicaid through the EPD program, which allows them to access Medicaid benefits, even if they do not meet the usual income requirements for Medicaid. For individuals like Mr. Thompson willing to contribute financially to maintain coverage, the Medicaid buy-in available through the EPD program helps them keep the supports they need to thrive at work, at home, and in the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 20, which will have a positive impact on Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

¹ Eric Thompson’s testimony is available through the Oregon Legislative Information System here: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/130504>