

February 20, 2025

Chair Lieber and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in strong support of Senate Bill 20. I believe in supporting policies that remove barriers to employment and create equitable pathways to meaningful work. This bill addresses a critical challenge that Oregonians with disabilities face - the risk of losing essential healthcare benefits when seeking employment. I want employed people with disabilities to be able to keep Medicaid coverage, regardless of income or resources because I want all of us to benefit from their workforce participation. I know from my own personal and professional experiences that people with disabilities bring tremendous talent to our workplaces - making us all more effective. But, systemic barriers like unreasonable income and asset limits often hinder our collective success.

Denying individuals employment or income opportunities on the basis of disability is unfair. I believe that we need to address the upstream social determinants of health. Employment and income are two social determinants that act as predictors of health status. Not having financial stability causes stress. This stress negatively impacts health. People shouldn't have to choose between necessary healthcare (including long-term supports) and meaningful work. I believe that individuals with disabilities have the right to determine the course of their own lives and that they deserve access to healthcare and economic prosperity.

As a parent of a child with disabilities and as an Oregonian, I urge you to support continued access to healthcare for working individuals with disabilities . Doing so moves Oregon closer to the inclusive and equitable future Oregonians deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carla Gay', written in a cursive style.

Carla Gay
Portland, Oregon