

Submitter: Jamie Callahan
On Behalf Of: ALL ADULT FOSTER HOMES
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3838

March 11, 2025

House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

State of Oregon

RE: House Bill 3838

Dear Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

I am writing to you regarding House Bill 3838, which addresses the creation of a Home and Community-Based Services Work Standards Board. While I understand the intent behind the bill, I am deeply concerned about its potential to further complicate the already precarious situation adult foster homes face in Oregon, particularly in terms of caregiver recruitment and retention.

Adult foster homes serve an absolutely vital role in the long-term care continuum, especially for individuals with high-acuity and complex care needs. These homes provide critical care for individuals who cannot be accommodated in traditional assisted living facilities. Sometimes these potential residents can live in the hospital or a skilled nursing facility, costing the state of Oregon hundreds of thousands in additional expenses.

Due to the increasingly complex regulations, particularly around caregiver training and the low Medicaid reimbursement rates, many adult foster homes are struggling to stay open. DO NOT make it more difficult for foster homes to hire caregivers.

The number one complaint I hear from adult foster home providers in southern Oregon is the acute shortage of caregivers. Caregivers are essential to the operation of these homes, but adult foster home owners are simply unable to attract or retain caregivers due to insufficient Medicaid reimbursement rates. This is where you need to focus your energy! As a result, many owners are forced to work long hours themselves, taking on most of the caregiving responsibilities, which is unsustainable.

In addition to low pay, Oregon's current caregiver training requirements create significant barriers to recruitment. Caregivers are required to complete over 40 hours of training before they can be hired by an adult foster home. This lengthy and complicated process deters many potential caregivers, particularly when they are competing for jobs in industries that have less stringent requirements and offer higher wages.

If the state continues to make it more complicated for adult foster homes to hire caregivers, many more homes will be forced to close. The closure of adult foster homes not only impacts the homes themselves but also the residents who rely on them for care. Individuals who are ready to be discharged from the hospital are left waiting for months because there simply are not enough adult foster homes with caregivers to take them in. This situation is unacceptable and unsustainable.

Adult foster home owners want to provide quality care, but they cannot do it alone. To resolve this crisis, I urge the committee to consider the following:

1. Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to allow adult foster homes to pay caregivers a livable wage.
2. Streamline caregiver training requirements to allow adult foster homes to hire qualified individuals more quickly without compromising care quality. DO NOT make it even more difficult.
3. Create incentives for caregivers to enter the field, such as paid training or bonuses for staying in the profession.
4. Recognize the expense on the state in the form of prolonged hospital stays if you do this. Making it more difficult to hire caregivers will be collateral damage in ways that you are not considering – GUARANTEED.

It is critical that we address these issues in order to prevent more adult foster homes from closing, particularly given their critical role in providing care to vulnerable populations. I implore you to reconsider any additional regulations that would make it more difficult for these homes to hire caregivers and, instead, focus on policies that will help support and sustain this vital sector.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will take these concerns seriously as you move forward with House Bill 3838.

Sincerely,
Jamie Callahan
Team Senior