March 12, 2025

Re: Senate Bill 1065 - Center for Decision Making Supports

Chair Gelser Blouin, Co-chair Linthicum, and members of the Committee:

My name is Alan DeLaTorre and I am writing in support of SB 1065, which will establish a Center for Decision-Making Supports, if passed.

My testimony is informed by personal experiences of my sister and my family, and expectations regarding my future self as a caregiver. When my sister was 16, she experienced a traumatic brain injury that reshaped her life, and the lives of our family. For a little less than 30 years, my sister has been supported by myriad programs across two states, including those that fall under the umbrella of developmental disability.

As we continue to age together, I will have increased responsibilities as my parents are no longer able to guide and support my sister. My mother has been her caregiver, advocate, coach, and life planner since her accident. It has not been easy. In 2019, my mom and sister moved to Oregon to be nearer to my young and growing family. After arriving, my mother needed to re-learn the ways that government and related sectors delivered long term supports and services. My mother is both a former educator, and an educated woman, but navigating the county and state systems took time and felt overly complex. I was disappointed in myself as I am a gerontologist and a trained researcher and I learned how difficult it is to learn about and understand the programs and options that were available to our family.

So, I ask you to help us, and help me. Like many Oregonians, I am raising school children while increasingly helping with my aging relatives. I will be a "sandwiched caregiver" as I will one day be responsible for caring for my sister and her well-being, my parents, and my children. The Center for Decision-Making Supports would support our family's needs and would ensure that families of adults with disabilities, like ours, can access the resources and services that Oregon offers.

Sincerely,

Alan DeLaTorre, PhD