



House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

State of Oregon

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 3838/Senate Bill 1138

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Munoz, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amber Myre, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Living Opportunities, a nonprofit organization that has been providing essential services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in Southern Oregon for 50 years. Our mission is to support individuals in leading independent and fulfilling lives in their communities, and we have proudly served thousands of individuals and families in that time.

I am writing today to strongly oppose House Bill 3838 and Senate Bill 1138, which seeks to establish a Home and Community-Based Services Workforce Standards Board. While we recognize the importance of investing in Oregon's direct care workforce, this bill introduces rigid, state-mandated workforce standards that threaten the viability of nonprofit providers like Living Opportunities.

Key Concerns with HB 3838:

Threat to the Financial Viability of Nonprofits

As a nonprofit provider, we operate within tight budgetary constraints, relying on government-set Medicaid reimbursement rates, grants, and donations. HB 3838 proposes workforce mandates—including wage and benefit increases—without providing sustainable funding mechanisms. Unlike private businesses, we cannot simply raise prices to offset increased costs. If enacted without adequate funding, this bill could force service reductions, program closures, and devastating consequences for the individuals we support.

Increased Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)

Oregon already faces a critical DSP workforce shortage. Living Opportunities, like many providers, struggles to recruit and retain staff due to low Medicaid reimbursement rates that limit our ability to offer competitive wages. Instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all wage board, the legislature should focus on increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates to allow providers the flexibility to pay competitive wages while maintaining operational sustainability.

Unintended Consequences on Service Availability

Additional bureaucratic oversight from an external workforce standards board would create unnecessary administrative burdens, diverting time and resources away from direct care. This will result in reduced service availability, longer waitlists for individuals in need, and additional strain on families seeking care for their loved ones. Oregon should be focused on expanding access to services, not creating new barriers that make it harder for providers to operate.

The Real Solution: Increase Medicaid Reimbursement Rates

The core issue in workforce retention is the lack of adequate funding for services. Instead of new regulatory mandates, we urge the legislature to prioritize direct investments in Medicaid reimbursement rates. This would allow providers like Living Opportunities to organically raise wages, offer benefits, and create long-term career paths for DSPs—without risking service reductions or closures.

Conclusion

Living Opportunities has spent 50 years advocating for and supporting individuals with I/DD, and we want to continue that work for the next 50 years. HB 3838, as written, puts our ability to do so at risk. We urge the committee to reject this bill and instead focus on real solutions—such as increased Medicaid reimbursement rates, recruitment incentives, and reducing administrative burdens—that will genuinely strengthen the home and community-based workforce without harming nonprofit providers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further.

Sincerely,

Amber Myre

Chief Executive Officer

Living Opportunities

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