



March 12, 2025

To: Senator Gelser Blouin, Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: Senate Bill 1066 (Support)

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

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 30 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity, and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Our members include the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (a statewide coalition of people with I/DD or “self-advocates”), peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations, and developmental disability providers and the DD Act Network Partners.

All Oregonians deserve equitable access to housing that preserves individual choice and makes available integrated, community-based living options. Senate Bill 1066 correctly balances the need for fire safety with practical considerations and the principle of fair housing choice. Requiring single family homes that serve as residential training homes or adult foster homes to install fire sprinklers creates a host of problems related to housing choice. The most significant of those problems is that persons with disabilities would have less access to housing in integrated community-based settings.

Many of the smaller residential or adult foster homes for those with IDD are in small rented or leased dwellings not otherwise required to have automatic sprinkler systems. Many landlords may refuse to permit the installation of fire suppression systems and that will limit housing choices for persons with disabilities. Although the landlord would need to permit them if requested as



a reasonable modification, the cost for installation would fall upon community provider organizations and some landlords may attempt to require that they be removed at the end of the lease. The financial strain that such a requirement places on providers would probably drive them to purchase or rent fewer and larger homes to defray the cost. Larger settings tend to be more institutional in nature. It also limits other individual choices for people with IDD such as who their housemates are or the number of housemates they choose to live with as housing becomes limited to larger more congregate settings.

The practice of requiring only small single-family homes that are licensed to serve people with disabilities to install sprinklers also raises other issues under the Fair Housing Act and state anti-discrimination statutes. For example, federal fair housing guidance indicates that local zoning and land use laws violate the Fair Housing Act, if they treat groups of unrelated persons with disabilities less favorably than similar groups of unrelated persons without disabilities.”¹ In other words, if persons without disabilities can live in precisely the same dwelling unit without being required to install automatic sprinkler systems yet persons receiving services from a disability services provider must have them, then the practice may be discriminatory. Unlike legitimate accessibility-related code requirements, there is not a strong connection to a disability-related need.

Finally, unscrupulous landlords who do not want disability service providers to rent their homes could take advantage of a sprinkler requirement as a “pretext” to deny individuals with disabilities housing. Instead of indicating that they are refusing to rent to them because of their disability, they may try to say that they refuse to rent because they will not permit a sprinkler system to be installed. While some landlords may have legitimate reasons to refuse sprinkler installation, the intent to exclude persons with disabilities from housing is not one of them.

For the above stated reasons, the DD coalition supports Senate Bill 1066 that will help maintain community-based housing choices for people with IDD.

¹ See Joint Statement of the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and Dept. of Justice, “State and Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act,” p 10 (November 10, 2016) (“Local zoning and land use laws that treat groups of unrelated persons with disabilities less favorably than similar groups of unrelated persons without disabilities violate the Fair Housing Act”).