

Submitter: Sarah Ray

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3838

House Bill 3838 promises much but ultimately fails to deliver.

Few states have done as much as Oregon has to help their least fortunate and vulnerable residents. Oregon should be proud of its commitment to providing essential needs and a healthy existence to its most vulnerable.

Yet House Bill 3838 is a wolf hiding in sheep's clothing. The legislation will boost costs, period. Oregon's renowned systems of care for older adults and people with disabilities are already under direct threat from a potential lack of federal funding. The timing of this bill speaks volumes about how little SEIU understands the system they are trying to grab power over.

SEIU, the major proponent of this bill, is, by its very nature, a political entity. Politics and the long-term goals of a union are at odds with the fundamental mission of protecting the state's most vulnerable.

The infrastructure the bill aims to create is simply another layer of government bureaucracy with nearly unlimited power over care workers who did not seek such an arrangement. This is not a hallmark of a Democratic system. How can we allow such a thing to take place? This raises so many questions with so few answers. If the union seeks to organize workers in this industry, let them organize them, but not through a bill. They set a precedent and undermined the purpose of unions through bureaucratic determination and not the workers' determination. They are politicizing instead of organizing. I cannot sit back as someone who served as a chief union steward and not speak up against this.

Allowing a powerful group—essentially a lobbying force—with political ties to oversee the state's most vulnerable is bad government, potentially creating a series of unforeseen consequences with real impact.

I can draw on years of experience as a union member and leader to evaluate this bill. I'm afraid this piece of legislation will do more harm than good. As a former member of union leadership, I know the organization is fallible. It is open to corruption, as is any political organization that holds a lot of power and money. This is not the road Oregon should go to allow any board to have that much power over a group of vulnerable individuals. If we have learned anything from the rollout of the current administration, we should know that no group should have power like this over a vulnerable population. I speak an unpopular truth to power. But I feel very strongly about this. It needs to be said. We cannot look at the landscape of government and power in the same way as we have. Don't be fooled. This bill is bad for Oregon, bad for the government, bad for Democracy, and, most of all, bad for our most vulnerable. Let the union organize the workers as they see fit, but not through a board.

Sarah Ray,

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