

Testimony of Joanne Fuhrman, CEO  
Opposition to HB 3838

Good afternoon, Chair Grayber, and Members of the Committee

My name is Joanne Fuhrman, I am the CEO of Partnership in Community Living, Inc. and I have worked in I/DD services in Oregon for over 40 years, starting my career as a DSP. I strongly oppose HB 3838 because it does nothing to improve person-focused support for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities(I/DD) or support the dedicated Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who make community inclusion possible.

PCL strives to not only be a great provider of services but also a great place to work. We know that one can not be achieved without the other. That means valuing the voices of our team members, following state and federal guidelines, and adhering to the many workplace protections Oregon has in place. In my submitted written testimony, I have included a copy of our most recent Agency Evaluation and Team Member Satisfaction report so you can hear directly from our team members on this topic.

Oregon's I/DD system is already highly regulated, overseen by CMS, ODDS, OHA, BOLI, and more. This bill creates an unelected, unregulated Standards Board with no accountability, one that bypasses existing oversight and gives outsized control to SEIU.

I/DD services are perilously underfunded. HB 3838 does not address this fact, nor does it raise DSP wages. **The independent HCBS study commissioned by the legislature identified a \$558 million funding gap for community provider organizations alone. Resources should be dedicated to addressing the crisis resulting from this shortfall rather than creating unnecessary oversight.**

HB 3838 will divert critical funding away from DSP wages into a repetitive unnecessary administrative structure. HB 3838 is not about quality, wages, strengthening self-directed person-centered service, or care—it's about control. I urge you to reject this harmful legislation and instead invest in real solutions that ensure DSPs are paid what they deserve, including annual cost of living adjustments, so people with I/DD continue to receive the quality, individualized services they need and deserve.

Thank you for your time. With respect and gratitude- Joanne Fuhrman

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As we reflect on 2024, PCL remains steadfast in its commitment to continuous growth and alignment with our mission and values. Our annual Agency Evaluation and Team Member Satisfaction Survey serves as a vital tool, offering insights that guide us in fostering an exceptional workplace, person-centered services, and partnerships with the people we support, their families, and the community.

This year marked a period of significant progress as we fulfill our Capacity and Restoration grant and advanced our initiatives in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Self-Advocacy, and modifications for accessibility in people's homes. Concurrently, we took a targeted approach to aligning our budget and expenditures to ensure sustainability.

The survey results reflect an overall trend of high satisfaction with continued strong scores across key metrics. Team members expressed a shared sense of purpose, collaboration, and commitment to PCL's mission. While we celebrate these successes, we remain dedicated to addressing areas for growth, particularly in enhancing communication and team dynamics.

Our journey of change and growth defines who we are, and we thank all team members for their feedback, trust, and dedication to PCL's mission. Together, we continue striving to be the best that we can be.

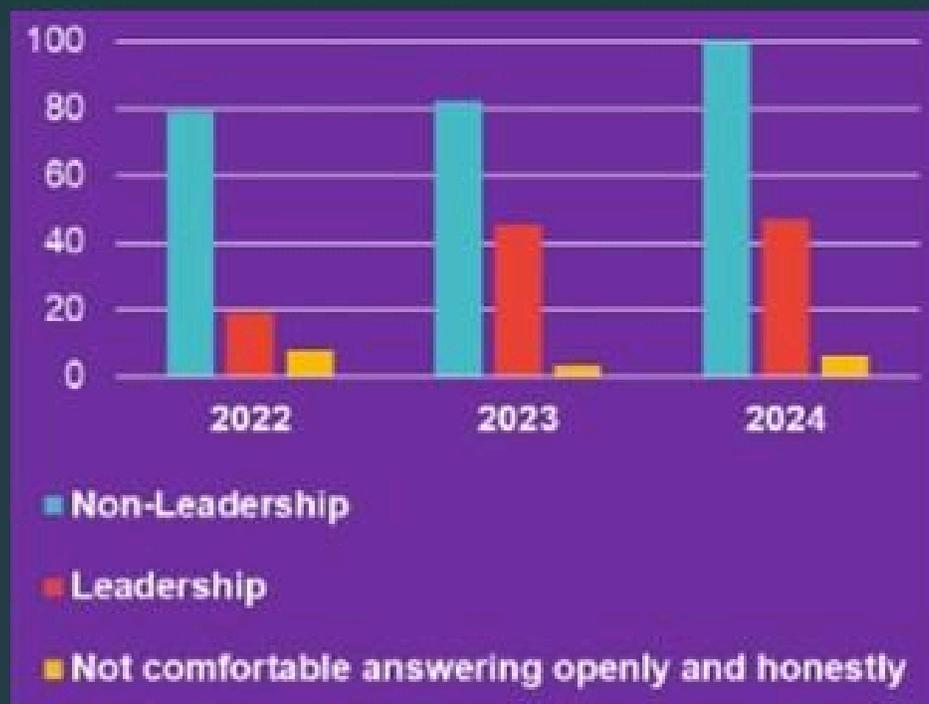
*"This company is amazing, and full of wonderful people! There are so many who have found a place where they are thriving."*

Responses have been averaged and graphed using a five-point scale, where one (1) is "Unacceptable - no perceived room for improvement," three (3) is "Meets my expectations," and five (5) is "Exceptional."

# 157

That's a **21%** increase from 2023  
and a **48%** increase from 2022!

of you responded.



The number of people not comfortable answering openly and honestly has dropped since 2022. We are committed to helping our team members feel they can trust us with their thoughts and ideas.

# Person-Centered Services



For every question in the Person-Centered Services topic, we scored the same or one-tenth lower in 2023 showing we are still exceeding expectations.

# We're a great provider of person-centered services

"I love that we look at the person as a whole and look past what others perceive."

"PCL teaches this at the core of everything we do. It can be seen in the supports we provide people."

"No matter how tough the situation, PCL has the best interest of the people we support at heart, no matter the circumstances."



## Your Ideas for Improvement



"Make sure to continually update information as their choices and preferences change."

"Make sure to get direct input from the people we support and those close to them outside of PCL employees. Make sure their goals are what they want, not what

"Keep bringing the PCI and goals to the team meetings to ensure the person we support has given their input, is heard. Remind other STCs to do this."

"Talk to the people we support before the meeting so they are comfortable."

# Person-Centered Services - Findings

Survey responses from 2022 to 2024 reflect consistently strong performance in Person-Centered Services, with average scores around 4.0 or higher. Positive themes include dedication to providing tailored support, effective teamwork, and a strong focus on individual needs and preferences, particularly highlighted by the efforts of dedicated DSPs. Leadership scores slightly outperform non-leadership, particularly in areas such as advocacy and confidence in achieving Board Directives. Overall, the data reflects stable and reliable service quality.

Opportunities for growth are evident in feedback highlighting inconsistent staffing, communication gaps between leadership and non-leadership, lack of follow-through on staff ideas, and the need for regular updates to documentation. While stable, and still scoring highly, non-leadership scores suggest that additional support and engagement from leadership could further enhance confidence and collaboration. Qualitative responses reflect the need to involve the people we support in planning, ensuring sustained excellence in person-centered practices.

## My Supervisor



# My Supervisor

My supervisor treats mistakes as learning opportunities.



My supervisor has the skills to do their job (competent & credible)

I am confident and comfortable using PCL's Open Door Policy



My supervisor responds to my suggestions.

My supervisor appreciates my contributions.



# My Supervisor



I am confident our actions achieve our Board Directive to be a great place to work.

"I appreciate my supervisor and all the time she puts into making sure we are successful and comfortable in our roles."

"My supervisor and I have grown as a working team. I appreciate her kindness, suggestions, and I feel valued."

"My supervisor is great! She is always responsive and works very hard to come up with solutions."

"There are times I wish my voice was heard more. Sometimes my supervisor responds to my suggestions with defensiveness rather than just another idea to meet the same goal."

"Every time I have gone to my supervisor with a concern or suggestion, they have gotten back to me promptly. Soon after, I have seen the concern or suggestion being implemented or known about from the rest of my team which is awesome."



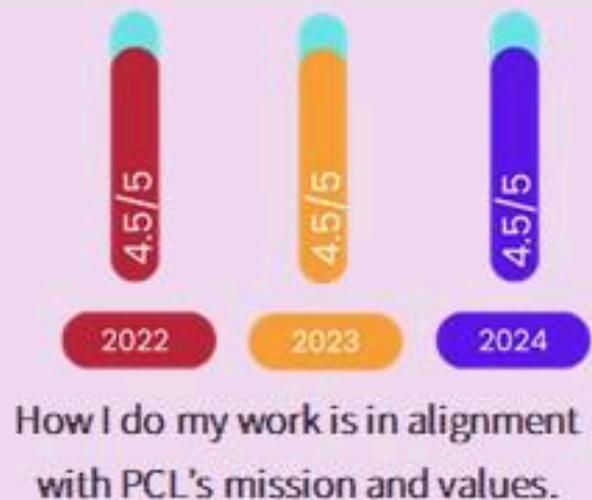
# My Supervisor - Findings

From 2022 to 2024, feedback regarding supervisors reflects exceeding expectations in performance and employee experience. Scores highlight growth in areas such as compassion, learning from mistakes, and appreciating contributions. While overall scores remain strong, areas like "confidence in using the Open Door Policy" and "consistency in communication" show opportunities for further improvement.

The qualitative feedback underscores a mix of positive themes and areas for development. Many employees value their supervisors' support, responsiveness, and approachability, frequently praising their mentorship and problem-solving skills. However, some comments reveal concerns about communication gaps, perceived favoritism, and inconsistencies in supervisor engagement. There are also recurring mentions of high workloads and stress affecting both supervisors and staff.

Overall, the feedback reflects striving for excellence in leadership while highlighting the need for continued focus on transparent communication, equitable treatment, and support for supervisors to sustain a positive and effective workplace culture.

## Mission & Values



# Mission & Values - Findings

Feedback demonstrates that PCL's mission and values continue to resonate deeply with team members, with scores consistently high across the years. A significant improvement in non-leadership scores from 2022, narrowing the gap with leadership, highlights the organization's efforts to better communicate and engage employees at all levels. Many employees describe the mission as a source of inspiration, guiding their work and enriching their personal lives.

Qualitative feedback reinforces the mission as a unifying force, with employees frequently mentioning pride in their roles, fulfillment in supporting others, and alignment with PCL's values. Areas for growth include enhancing consistency across teams, addressing stress, and creating more opportunities for direct engagement with the people supported. Strengthening communication by maintaining barrier-free access to the leadership of our agency has shown to be a great step that should be maintained.

## Team Dynamics

2024

3.8/5

2023

3.8/5

Members of my team trust each other.

2022

3.8/5

Once decisions are made, members of my team support these decisions and work toward success.

2024

3.8/5

2023

3.8/5

2022

3.8/5

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.1/5

Members of my team offer each other support.

2022

4.0/5

# Team Dynamics

2024

4.0/5

2023

4.2/5

2022

3.9/5

I am actively involved in decision making that affects my team.

Team decisions are made through a process that encourages people to express opinions.

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.1/5

2022

3.9/5

2024

3.9/5

2023

4.0/5

2022

4.0/5

Abundance Mentality - believe there are enough resources and opportunities for everyone to have enough.

Humility - promote the idea of group success over personal advancement, apologize, learn from mistakes, are forgiving, create hope, and express gratitude.

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.0/5

2022

4.0/5

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.2/5

2022

4.1/5

Integrity - do the right thing even when no one is watching, - honest, trustworthy, transparent, practice positive intent, act in the best interest of the people we support.

Levity - believe we are at our best when we work hard and have fun together - latitude, gratitude, attitude.

2024

4.2/5

2023

4.4/5

2022

4.3/5

# Team Dynamics

2024

4.2/5

2023

4.3/5

2022

4.2/5

Tenacity - have a devotion to purpose, take initiative, willing to risk, have courage, advocate for social justice, etc.

"Our team is very cohesive. We help each other and share our workload because we are all in this together."

"I appreciate that our team communicates and is open and honest about what we need."

"My team overall is amazing. We try to mentor new members, we are there for each other, and we try to help everyone succeed in their roles."



"There was a significant shift in our team dynamics. My favorite aspect of the team a few years ago was that I felt everyone's voice was heard and everyone's opinion was valued. I do not currently have that same feeling."

"Many times major decisions are made by one or two people that affect everyone on the team. Those decisions are often not discussed with other members of the team leading to confusion and distrust."

# Team Dynamics - Findings

While still exceeding expectations, the area of Team Dynamics continues to be our lowest scoring overall. This is impacted significantly by high turnover in the DSP and STC position. Feedback on team dynamics from 2022 to 2024 reflects steady scores in trust, decision-making support, and team cohesion. Improvements are observed in "Members of my team offer each other support" (from 4.0 in 2022 to 4.1 in 2023 and 2024) and "Team decisions are made through a process that encourages people to express opinions" (from 3.9 in 2022 to 4.1 in 2023 and 2024). PCL's Playbook Values, including Humility, Integrity, Levity, and Tenacity, maintain strong scores, with small fluctuations indicating a positive but evolving team culture.

Qualitative feedback highlights a mix of strengths and challenges. Many employees describe teams as cohesive, supportive, and dedicated to the people they support, emphasizing communication, levity, and resilience as key strengths. However, some teams struggle with turnover, favoritism, and inconsistent decision-making processes. Issues such as resentment, clashing personalities, and perceived inequities in workloads or recognition are recurring themes, suggesting the need for continued focus on interpersonal training and communication skills.

Several comments emphasize the importance of balancing team and individual success, with some employees calling for more equitable involvement in decision-making. Others highlight the impact of leadership in shaping team dynamics. Strong leadership practices, such as mentoring, accountability, and embracing new team members, were noted as contributing factors to positive team dynamics.



# Engagement

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.2/5

2022

4.1/5

My contributions are recognized by people who are not my direct supervisor.

At work, I have the opportunity to work in my strengths every day.

2024

4.3/5

2023

4.2/5

2022

4.3/5

2024

4.4/5

2023

4.4/5

2022

4.5/5

I am proud to work for PCL.

I see myself working for PCL three (3) years from now.

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.1/5

2022

4.3/5

2024

4.3/5

2023

4.3/5

2022

4.3/5

I am able to see the positive results of my work and efforts.

# Engagement—Findings

The data highlights a strong and enduring sense of pride and satisfaction among employees at PCL, with consistently high scores for pride in their work (4.4–4.5) and seeing positive results (4.3). Employees frequently express fulfillment in making a difference, appreciating the opportunities for personal growth, and finding alignment with PCL's mission and values. Leadership and non-leadership roles report similar satisfaction levels, with leadership showing slightly higher scores in areas like utilizing strengths and having adequate tools and resources.

While overall feedback is positive, recurring themes in qualitative responses point to areas for growth. Concerns about compensation, work-life balance, and limited advancement opportunities highlight challenges to sustaining engagement long-term. Employees also note that the varying quality of supervision impacts their experience.

## Learning Opportunities

2024

4.2/5

2023

4.1/5

2022

4.1/5

PCL's ongoing training gives me the knowledge I need to meet the needs of my position.

Once decisions are made, members of my team support these decisions and work toward success.

2024

4.1/5

2023

4.0/5

2022

4.1/5

Both topics for learning opportunities increased in 2024 and continue to exceed expectations. We are excited to be in the middle of revamping our Onboarding process, and looking at our Orientation classes as well as PCLU opportunities for team members.

# Joanne Fuhrman, CEO



I trust Joanne to guide our agency successfully into the future.

Joanne has the skills and knowledge to guide our agency successfully into the future.



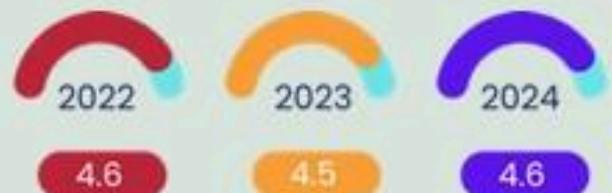
Joanne models a commitment to PCL's mission and values through leading by example.

Humility—Joanne promotes the idea of group success over personal advancement.



Integrity—Joanne's performance is ethical and honest even when no one is watching.

Abundance mentality—Joanne's decisions and guidance begins with a belief that there are enough resources and opportunities for everyone to have enough.



# Joanne Fuhrman, CEO



Tenacity—Joanne has a devotion to purpose.

Levity—Joanne believes we are at our best when we work hard and have fun together.



## Joanne Fuhrman, CEO — Findings

The data highlights Joanne's strong alignment with the agency's mission and values. Ratings for key leadership qualities, such as trust (4.5-4.6), knowledge (4.6-4.7), and leading by example (4.6), reflect consistently high confidence in her ability to guide the agency into the future. Similarly, Joanne's embodiment of the Playbook values—humility, integrity, abundance mentality, tenacity, and levity—received steady ratings between 4.5 and 4.7 over the past three years.

Team members frequently describe Joanne as inspiring, approachable, and deeply committed to both the people supported and the staff. Phrases like "Joanne is social justice in human form" and "she leads with grace, kindness, and confidence" highlight her unique ability to connect with others and navigate complex issues. Feedback also suggests opportunities to slow down and be more intentional with changes, reflecting her openness to continued growth.

Overall, the data and feedback reflect a leader who is trusted and admired for her dedication, integrity, and vision, inspiring others to bring their best selves to this important work every day.

# Joanne Fuhrman, CEO — Comments

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts regarding the performance of PCL's CEO, Joanne Fuhrman. This information is used to conduct her annual Mutual Action Plan (performance review) with our Board of Directors. To protect privacy, feedback mentioning past or current employees by name has been excluded from this report. However, the full survey results have been shared with our Board of Directors. As the survey is anonymous, we cannot address individual concerns directly. If you do not see your direct feedback and you'd like to discuss your comments or these results in more detail, please contact Joanne Fuhrman or Sarah Swenson, who can connect you with our Board of Directors.

## Non-Leadership

- You are great! – x3
- Thank you for all you do. – x3
- Thank you for everything you do. – x4
- Thank you for your dedication and hard work! – x3
- You're awesome/amazing! – x5
- Thank you for always being there for all your employees.
- Joanne is a rock star!
- I think Joanne is fabulous at what she does and is a great leader and role model.
- I am amazed at how they created PCL and have had the company grow so much. Also, I feel comfortable talking with Joanne; she doesn't make me think that she is a better person than anyone else. She listens.
- She's an amazing woman. I was very glad to meet her and hear her talk about PCL's history.
- You are doing well, keep it up.
- In the short time I have been with PCL, I can't believe how many times I've talked to Joanne already. She definitely walks her talk and practices what she preaches, and I couldn't be happier to work for her.
- You really give your WHOLE self to the people who work for you; in turn, we give our WHOLE selves to the people we support.

# Joanne Fuhrman, CEO — Comments Continued

## Non-Leadership Comments Continued:

- I have yet to meet an Executive Director who's so involved with all facets of the company. Joanne is all about the company, and it shows in her participation in everything that is PCL. A true representation of what it means to lead by example.
- We've come a long way, you and I, and I thank you and Walt and Lorrie for fighting for me to become a part of PCL. I know I haven't always had the greatest attitude, but a lot of that was surrounding personal loss and tragedy and not properly dealing with that grief, not anything with PCL or you (or Walt or Lorrie). I love seeing your passion for this work.
- After our interactions in the Social Justice Influencer Crew and personally, I feel even more confident in PCL's Mission and Values. I appreciate your levity and willingness to listen to those who work for you. You make me feel valued and appreciated as a team member.
- Thank you for everything that you've done and the opportunities that have come from that for so many people, supported and otherwise.
- I am inspired by your commitment and dedication. I love working for PCL!
- I appreciate your dedication to the people that you have served over all these years. Being a part of something so special and unique that you created has been a true honor. I believe in your mission statement and that your heart is always in the best place. You lead with grace, kindness, knowledge, and confidence, and it sets you apart as a Director from many I have worked for. You have accomplished so much and paved so many paths for so many. You should be proud.
- You're a cool person, and I appreciate being there and caring for who we all support.
- You are such a wonderful and inspiring person and I am so thankful that I get to see the fruits of your labor every day and be a part of continuing that growth for those we support!
- Doing a great job, and she shares information freely.
- I respect everything that Joanne does for this agency.

# Joanne Fuhrman, CEO — Comments Continued

## Non-Leadership Comments Continued:

- As a whole, I believe Joanne to be a dynamic person; she spreads kindness, has great vision, and desires to help people have the best life possible.
- It is greatly appreciated how much she is involved not only with the company, but with all staff and the care and compassion she gives.
- Great job, thanks for a great foundation to grow in, and add my two cents.
- This is a great company that you've created. I'm very happy I've found my way to become a part of it. Thank you!
- I really like how inviting she is when having conversations.
- I can't imagine anyone I know doing as well with as little financial support at times as Joanne does.
- Stay humble.
- You do amazing considering the constant stress and increasing demand for wages. I understand you are doing the best you can. I appreciate you for everything you do for us DSPs and the people we're so blessed to support.
- You are da the bomb!
- Works hard, and I have always found her to be available.
- I think she does a wonderful job.
- I really enjoy watching In the Know, but sometimes it feels like it is the same thing as previous sessions.
- I often feel like Joanne and other members of leadership want things to be in-person that do not have to be in-person.
- Thank you for having the values that make providing services a great experience!
- She is just an awesome human being who wants the best for the people we support.

# Joanne Fuhrman, CEO — Comments Continued

## Leadership Comments:

- Keep doing what you're doing. You make a difference in people's lives.
- Thank you, Joanne, for your endless passion.
- Joanne is inspiring. The way she views this work is unlike anyone I have met. She is all in and puts her whole heart into it.
- Thank you for all that you do!!
- I feel Joanne, at times, will rush into a change or project. Sometimes, waiting and seeing for a bit can be very beneficial.
- My experience with Joanne has all been positive and inspiring.
- Joanne is an amazing person during all my interactions with her.
- You're doing an amazing job.
- To balance the budget, we must stop some spending. It's sending mixed messages. Saving pennies adds up to 1000's.
- I am so thankful for you and all you do in this company, the people we support, and those of us who work for you. You are so powerful, from Board meetings to the unspoken. I don't know how you carry so much weight so easily; you make it all look like a breeze. Thank you for being so honest and upfront with us about what is going on; I am super thankful to be a part of the PCL family, and I can't wait for many more years to watch this company THRIVE. Your hard work and dedication don't go unseen. Thank you!
- What to say about Joanne. I go back to my first summer here, when I was getting to know Bradley. I asked her if I could bring Bradley to the pool, and it wasn't a second thought, it was a "what day, let me get you a key" type of answer. And that has always stuck with me. Having just left the Leadership Briefing, addressing different people virtually, she chose to bring up compassion and empathy to those who are hurting over the election with dignity and grace. Because that is the kind of person Joanne is.
- Her actions and the things she does talk so loudly for her that we don't have to say anything about her. Joanne IS social justice in human form, and we are lucky to have her at our helm.

# Recommendations

## Listening to the People We Support

We need to strengthen how we ensure the people we support are involved in decision-making at all levels, from daily choices to long-term planning. This includes empowering Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to consistently ask and act on the preferences of the people they support, even in seemingly small decisions like meal planning, shopping, and scheduling. To increase accountability, we recommend updating team meeting agendas to regularly document and review how people's voices are influencing decisions. Additionally, we should expand the work of the Social Justice Influencer Crew to provide training and tools that help all team members build these practices into their daily work.

## Listening to Our Team Members

Provide active listening training for Leaders to listen to DSPs and team members without defensiveness or dismissing ideas prematurely while focusing on understanding the root concerns. Leadership can commit to transparent communication about how concerns are addressed or why certain actions can't be taken. We recommend consistent practices for all teams to have Team Meeting Agendas readily accessible for team members to add items and ideas at any time. Additionally, focus on individual team health with training that incorporates the Speed of Trust, the 5 Behaviors of a Cohesive Team, etc. to directly and positively impact team dynamics. Additionally, incorporate the 5 Behaviors of a Cohesive Team training into Leadership Academy and add to the Executive Team Meeting Agenda to follow up on qualitative feedback.

