

**SUBMITTED TESTIMONY OF LASHUAN BETHEA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND WORKPLACE STANDARDS**

March 17, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Elmer and Munoz, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to share this testimony for the record. My name is LaShuan Bethea, and I am a registered nurse and attorney with over 25 years of experience in and passion for long term care. I currently serve as the Executive Director of the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL), the assisted living arm of the American Health Care Association.

NCAL is dedicated to serving the needs of the assisted living community through national advocacy, education, professional development, and quality initiatives. Across the country, more than 800,000 individuals call assisted living (AL) home in one of more than 30,000 AL communities. This sector of long term care and senior living employs more than 470,000 dedicated caregivers and support staff.

Assisted living thrives and is popular among residents and families because it is regulated at the state level. States have demonstrated that they are much more adaptable than the federal government, and they don't take this responsibility lightly. Oregon's regulatory environment is one of the most comprehensive of any state.

I am here today to provide a national perspective on HB 3838 and urge this committee to carefully consider this bill's impact on Oregon's assisted living providers who are serving some of Oregon's most vulnerable older adults and people with disabilities, as well as those residents who depend on this care every day. NCAL is concerned that the proposed legislation turns a collaborative process that has worked so well in many states, including Oregon, into a unilateral process.

The Beaver State has been at the forefront of assisted living for many decades. The nation has looked to Oregon as a model for a home and community-based system that is innovative, well-funded, and supports high quality standards of care that our seniors deserve. We have seen Oregon invest in long term care and embrace quality improvement models, and this has supported the state's paid caregivers, as well. According to PHI, Oregon ranks third in the nation when it comes to workforce policies and economic indicators for direct caregivers.

This is an established collaborative effort between the legislature and stakeholders.

The proposed HCBS Workforce Standard Board would upend this collaboration and the progress Oregon has made by turning this decades-long collaborative process into a unilateral one. It would further complicate the regulatory environment, potentially causing

provider confusion on which authority to follow. This is especially true when the Board establishes new rules and processes that may conflict with existing state regulations.

HB 3838 will make it harder for providers to keep up – especially smaller facilities in rural communities. If the Board can unilaterally set pay and staffing standards, bypassing the legislative process, we could see assisted living communities with limited resources passing increasing costs on to consumers or worse – shuttering their doors, displacing seniors who need consistent care. This – at a time when Oregon’s population is aging and the need for long term care will only increase.

Providers want what is best for residents and the compassionate people who care for them. The best results are achieved when all stakeholders can work together. And right now, Oregon is best-in-class for caregiver training requirements, worker supportive policies, protections, and rights to organize, and holds facilities and employers accountable in meeting those high standards.

Let’s continue to make Oregon a leader in the assisted living space and work collaboratively to support our residents and our caregivers. We urge you to oppose this bill and allow all stakeholders to continue to use the current process to find ways to collaboratively continue to support workers, providers, and consumers.

Thank you again for this opportunity and for holding this important hearing.

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