



Monday March 17, 2025

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

My name is Odalis Aguilar and I am a political coordinator at Oregon AFSCME. Our union represents over 39,000 workers across the state in both public and private sectors and we believe in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families. We write in strong support of HB 3838 to establish a Workforce Standards Board in the Long-term Care Industry.

Workers represented by AFSCME across the state who are case managers or eligibility workers help connect those Oregonians in need to long term care services and our organization stands in solidarity with the workers represented by SEIU who then provide critical care for seniors and people with disabilities all over the state.

The aging population in Oregon deserves workers who are well seasoned and we know that the current workforce is underpaid, overworked, and denied the basic job protections that other essential workers receive. This has resulted in a crisis in care—one that is harming workers and putting vulnerable Oregonians at risk.

For one reason or another, many people across the state depend on long term care workers to care for their loved ones. These individuals become part of our families and they provide critical support with day to day activities like; bathing, dressing, mobility and administering medications. Services can be short-term, while people recover from an injury or illness, or long-term for many years. The work these individuals do is centered around the person's needs; they dedicate their lives to supporting others in a time of need where many are vulnerable.

Wages are so low that nearly half of direct care workers rely on public assistance just to survive. Many receive no benefits or cannot afford the ones offered. With pay as low as \$15.75 per hour and little job stability, it's no surprise that the industry faces a 51% turnover rate. This level of instability is unsustainable.

Today, care workers—who are still disproportionately women, people of color, and immigrants—are denied fair wages and a voice in their working conditions. A Workforce Standards Board is a proven, cost-effective solution that will lift workers out of poverty, stabilize the workforce, and ensure that every Oregonian receives the care they deserve. We urge you to support HB 3838 and stand with the workers who keep our care system running.

In solidarity,
Odalis Aguilar
Oregon AFSCME