

I have been working almost 20 years for a non-profit organization that has been supporting adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Oregon for more than 50 years. The focus of our organization is to empower individuals to choose the life they want without disabilities limiting their opportunities.

As an advocate for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, I ask you to please vote **‘NO’ to the Home and Community-based Services Workforce Standards Board (SB1138 and HB3838)**.

These bills are written to put the **wants of the workforce before the needs of individuals** receiving supports.

Although the activities of this board are framed around the idea of improving support to individuals,

1. The ***purpose*** of the board, the intent of the rules it will create, and the board’s punitive “accountability” enforcement are **NOT centered around supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**. In fact, when rules created by this board conflict with the needs of the individual, the board’s rules will override the individual’s needs.
2. The ***additional expenses***, including the additional workforce to make the bureaucracy operate, will **NOT go towards supporting people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**. This power given to the board to penalize agencies and individuals who do not comply with the one-size-fits-all rules it establishes will take more time and money away from helping vulnerable people and give it to whom? Will those resources be given to something more important than for what the resources were intended—supporting those receiving services?
3. With all due respect, ***the author*** of these bills has a purpose and mission that is **NOT centered around supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**. *Thirteen people*—only half representing people receiving supports—will create generalized, one-size-fits-all, State-wide rules that might not address all the specific, unique needs of all the programs in all legislative districts. These rules will not directly benefit supported individuals—but will focus on employee wages, training, work schedules, working conditions, additional worker protections, and other expectations from employers. Why are the Bureau of Labor and Industry and Union representatives among these thirteen board members if the board is focused on supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities?!

This Workforce Standards Board is an unnecessary bureaucratic entity with excessive power and too little representation from the people it impacts. The problems it attempts to address can be solved without a new overreaching, resource hungry, unregulated board:

1. Is a specific training program needed to improve the quality of supports? The Oregon Department of Human Services, the Office of Developmental Disability Services, Aging and

People with Disabilities, and other existing **State departments already have the authority to create and enforce new training programs and ensure agencies provide appropriate support to people who need it.**

2. How can we ensure the direct support work force is treated fairly, protected, sustainable, and working in safe conditions? The Bureau of Labor and Industry, Oregon OSHA, the Oregon Employment Department, the Department of Labor and other **government entities already have power to bolster the direct support workforce, ensure employees are safe, and protect them from unfair treatment by employers.**
3. How can we ensure the Direct Support Workforce receives sufficient wages and benefits to sustain the workforce? The Legislature already commissioned a comprehensive **Burns and Associates Wage and Rate study that clearly and objectively explains what wages and rates will sustain the direct care workforce.**
4. Who will advocate for the Direct Support Workforce? **The people who genuinely care for, love, and advocate for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities will be the strongest advocates for the Direct Support Workforce.** Year after year advocates, direct support workers, organizations, associations, and others who are enthusiastic about supporting people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities appeal to the Legislature for higher wages, benefits, and working conditions for the Direct Care workforce. No matter how many new bureaucratic boards or special committees are formed, they will not advocate stronger than those of us who rely on a strong Direct Support Workforce to make a difference in the lives of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

The workforce that provides direct support to people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities are heroes. They are the most important part of supporting individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. They meet the personalized needs of everyone they support with big hearts and genuine care for those they help. **The absolute best way to support direct support employees, is to provide sufficient funding and support that focuses on the needs of individuals they support.**

The board these bills create assumes excessive power to do things already done by existing State departments and other advocates. These bills are clearly worded for a purpose that is not focused on supporting people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. For the sake of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, please vote 'NO' to the HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES WORKFORCE STANDARDS BOARD (SB1138 and HB3838).

Sincerely,



Dalan Moss (Warrenton, OR)