

Submitter: Krista Smith
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3838

Testimony in Opposition to HB 3838

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

My name is Krista Smith, and I am the Executive Director of RISE Services, Inc. I have dedicated the last 20 years to the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) field here in Oregon, beginning my career as a Direct Support Professional (DSP).

At RISE, we prioritize open communication, safety, innovation, and specialized training to advance nationally recognized, person-centered support. We invest in our employees through competitive wages, education, retirement, and other benefits to remain an employer of choice. We also hold ourselves to the highest standards through strategic planning, strict reporting requirements, and satisfaction surveys to ensure accountability and quality care.

Oregon Does Not Need More Red Tape!

Taxpayer dollars should go directly to care workers—not a duplicative wage board and more paperwork. The proposed Standards Board in HB 3838 is redundant, legally problematic, and ultimately harmful to the very services it claims to support.

1) Redundant & Legally Problematic Regulation: Oregon already has extensive oversight of wages, hours, and working conditions through OARs, OSHA, BOLI, and state labor laws. The creation of a wage board with overlapping authority is not only unnecessary but could also conflict with established state and federal labor laws, exposing the state to costly legal challenges. Oregon already conducts wage and rate studies, making this board a waste of valuable resources at a time when community governments face serious budget shortfalls. Instead, the Legislature should focus on funding the most recent wage study (HB 2150/SB 131).

2) Unfunded Mandates & Administrative Burdens: Disability providers operate on fixed government funding and cannot absorb unfunded mandates. This board would introduce new compliance and reporting requirements without additional funding, forcing providers to divert resources from direct care. Rising labor costs without increased funding could lead to service reductions, hiring freezes, or closures. Granting a wage board authority over an already highly regulated industry sets a

dangerous precedent for regulatory overreach and risks destabilizing essential services.

3) Threat to Disability Services: A one-size-fits-all approach undermines person-centered care, stifles innovation in specialized programs, and limits provider flexibility and client choice. Rigid workforce standards risk prioritizing employee benefits over client safety and quality of care.

4) Ulterior Motives & Conflicts of Interest: The proposed Standards Board is a clear attempt to expand SEIU's influence by collecting workers' personal information and diverting taxpayer dollars away from direct care. This directly conflicts with federal law, which protects an employee's right to freely choose whether to unionize and with which union—typically done through a grassroots effort. Furthermore, because SEIU drafted this proposal, they are positioned to dominate the unelected board, effectively controlling outcomes in their favor. Many already unionized DSPs in Oregon receive little advocacy from SEIU, and their bargained wages are lower than what our organization currently pays. SEIU has historically opposed DSP wage increases while advocating for Personal Support Workers (PSWs) to earn more—yet now seeks to control our workforce? These conflicts of interest call into question the true purpose of this board.

Instead of creating unnecessary bureaucracy, the Legislature should focus on funding the most recent wage and rate study via HB 2150/SB 131 and strengthening existing regulations such as SB 136—not duplicating them.

Thank you,

~Krista Smith