

Good afternoon, Chair Grayber and members of the committee. I am Rita Effros, a resident of Mirabella Portland and a long-time educator speaking in opposition to this bill. During my 25 years of teaching a course at UCLA on the medical and social aspects of aging, I became acutely aware of the health and lifespan disparities among older adults, simply based on their zip codes or neighborhoods. The affected individuals—many of whom are severely stressed financially-- are largely served by home and community-care groups. Unfortunately, some of these organizations have already been forced to close for financial reasons. In the absence of additional funding, this bill will further exacerbate their already fragile existence.

As past President of the Gerontological Society of America, I interact with colleagues throughout the U.S. whose research is specifically focused on social and caregiving issues. I have learned that in the three states that have established workforce standard boards, the intended goals have not been fulfilled.

Oregon is ranked among the top states in providing excellent quality home and community-based services. In its present form, HB3838 could severely impact care of older adults and people with disabilities by increasing costs, reducing affordability and greatly diminishing options for care in these vulnerable populations. Moreover, the proposed board composition is problematic in that it lacks the requisite expertise and fails to fairly represent the specific groups that would be most severely affected.

In order to protect the underserved populations of seniors and persons with disabilities, please vote NO on this bill.