

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

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Elmer, and members of the committee,
My name is Robb Courtney, my wife and I own the Gresham office of an In-Home-Care Agency serving seniors in the East Metro area in need of supportive services for the past 18 years. Over 80% of our clients are private-pay, with most of the balance being paid by the US Department of Veterans Affairs at rates which require subsidy by us. We cannot afford to take Medicaid clients given the low reimbursement rates.

Thank you for the opportunity to address our concerns related to HB 3838, which would create a Workforce Standards Board in Oregon to oversee the Long-Term Care System. We oppose the creation of this Board.

Oregon's Long Term Care system is already very highly ranked for quality of care and worker compensation. Providers of long-term care services are already regulated by multiple state agencies, including the Oregon Health Authority, the Department of Human Services, Oregon OSHA, and BOLI. The Workforce Standards Board would be duplicative, further increase an already burdensome regulatory environment, decrease innovation and competitiveness.

HB 3838 could devastate Oregon's long-term care system. It is an unfunded mandate that will increase costs to consumers and providers without any mechanism for increasing funding through the Medicaid system. It would raise out-of-pocket costs for seniors and people with disabilities on fixed incomes, further reducing access to care. We have already seen this happen. Since 2019 our wages have increased by 55%, driving a 50% increase in prices, and a corresponding 50% decrease in hours of service and client census. This has occurred while our staff and clients have consistently rated us as one of the best In-Home-Care agencies in Oregon and the nation. Increasing potential clients respond with dismay when they learn the cost of care exceeds their ability to pay.

HB 3838 is both unnecessary and counterproductive. We strongly urge the Legislature to oppose this measure. Instead, we hope stakeholders and lawmakers will come together this session to make investments in workers, Medicaid providers, and Oregon's seniors and people with disabilities.