

Submitter: Ian Stidham
On Behalf Of: Abilities at Work
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3838

Dear House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards members,

I am the Interim Director for Abilities at Work, a provider organization based in Hillsboro, and I am writing to you in opposition to House Bill 3838. This bill is a misguided approach to an important issue: securing wage increases for Direct Support Professionals.

The bill fails to recognize the unique nature of ODDS services and how they differ from APD services. ODDS services are highly individualized and based on person-centered practices. A one-size-fits-all workforce model would undermine the person-centered nature of these supports and limit the ability of providers to reflexively respond to each person's needs.

In an already heavily regulated system, adding another layer of bureaucracy with overlapping or competing regulations creates unnecessary complexity. This will direct resources away from DSP wages toward administrative overhead. The bill could also force some providers to limit services during a time when Oregonians need expanded access to care.

There are more effective ways to support DSP wages, and the Legislature already has the power to do so. The independent Home and Community Based Services study commissioned by the legislature identified a \$530 Million funding gap for community providers and lays out a rate model that would increase DSP wages. Fully funding this gap in Medicaid reimbursements is a better way to accomplish the goal of raising DSP wages.

To summarize, DSPs do critical work every day to serve some of Oregon's most vulnerable citizens. They deserve a living wage. Ultimately, the only sustainable way to meet this goal is through direct investment in chronically underfunded services. HB 3838 raises costs, reduces access to care, and creates bureaucratic complexity with no guarantee of improving wages for DSPs.

Please do not move forward with this bill.

Thank you,
Ian Stidham