

Office Email
sen.kaysejama@oregonlegislature.gov

Legislative Website
www.oregonlegislature.gov/Jama



Capitol Phone
503-986-1724

Capitol Address
900 Court St. NE, S-223,
Salem, Oregon 97301

State Senator Kayse Jama

Senate District 24 (D-East Portland, Damascus, Boring)

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

I write to you today in strong support of HB 3838, which would establish the Home and Community-Based Services Workforce Standards Board. As Oregon's population ages and the demand for long-term care continues to grow, we are failing the workers who provide this essential care. Workers in homecare, foster care, and community-based care are overburdened, underpaid, and leaving the field at alarming rates. This crisis in our workforce is also a crisis for public health, leaving thousands of Oregonians—many of them elderly, disabled, or otherwise vulnerable—without the care they deserve.

Long-term care workers are the backbone of our healthcare system, yet they are among the lowest-paid workers in our state. Despite performing critical, often exhausting work, two out of three long-term care workers must rely on government assistance just to meet their basic needs.¹ These wages are simply not enough to sustain a family, let alone retain skilled professionals in the field. Without fair compensation, many workers are forced to leave for better-paying jobs, deepening staffing shortages. Understaffed care facilities mean that workers are routinely forced to cover multiple jobs, leading to burnout, exhaustion, and high turnover¹. This workforce shortage is particularly concerning given that Oregon's aging population is growing rapidly and the demand for caregivers will increase substantially in coming years.

Equity for long-term care workers is also a matter of racial and gender justice. These workers are overwhelmingly women and people of color, groups that have historically been excluded from basic labor protections. Home and community-based care workers were left out of the original Fair Labor Standards Act, denying them the wage and workplace protections afforded to other professions.²

HB 3838 is a necessary first step toward addressing these problems. The Home and Community-Based Services Workforce Standards Board would set baseline wages, benefits, and working conditions for the industry, ensuring that caregivers are paid fairly and provided with the protections they deserve. The board would also give those on the front lines a voice in shaping the policies that directly impact their livelihoods. By improving working conditions, this bill would help stabilize the long-term care workforce, reducing turnover and ensuring that Oregonians receive consistent, high-quality care.

Long-term care workers support some of our most vulnerable residents, yet we have failed to support them in return. Without fair wages, safe conditions, and proper staffing, workers and patients will suffer.

I strongly urge your support for HB 3838. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

¹ [Oregon's Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment 2025](#)

² [How home care workers were left out of FDR's New Deal | Vox](#)