

Submitter: Jennifer Murphy
On Behalf Of: CEN SB 538
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Murphy, and I am writing to urge you to prioritize SB 538, also known as Tensy's Law. This bill is crucial for ensuring that our most vulnerable children in Oregon, particularly those with severe disabilities, have access to the care they deserve.

For over a decade, Oregon has promised to provide services that allow these children to remain in their homes and communities instead of being placed in costly institutional settings. Unfortunately, the current ban on compensating parents as care workers has created significant barriers to accessing the Medicaid services to which these children are entitled. This situation is particularly dire in rural areas like Southern Oregon, where we are facing a severe shortage of qualified caregivers and can't access our HCBS.

By removing the cap currently on the CEN Waiver, the wait list for paying parents for the care they provide, can be accessed now and ensure that high-needs children on the waitlist today receive the consistent, high-quality care they require from those who know and love them best. This is not just a matter of policy; it is a matter of common sense. During the temporary allowance implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, families reported positive outcomes, with their disabled children being healthier, happier, and making meaningful progress in their development.

We have a very important opportunity right now to make these changes permanent and address the inefficiencies in our current system. The proposed amendment to the CEN waiver, which is the the 40-hour per week cap for eligible children under SB 91, is a necessary step forward.

I implore you to consider the impact that passing SB 538 will have on countless families across Oregon. These families are in every district. They are your constituents. It is time to fund the kids, not the system. We cannot allow this bill to die; it has taken three legislative sessions and immense effort from parents, children, and advocates who have bravely shared their experiences and struggles. Please hear them and help this bill this session.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I strongly encourage you to support SB 538 and help bring about the positive change that our children and families desperately need. We are counting on you all.

Please prioritize THIS cost saving bill!!! We have THE solution for ensuring the most vulnerable kids in Oregon have access to wonderful care!!! My child that is on CIIS is #548, please schedule this bill this session and fund it. Promises made should be promises kept.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Murphy
Winston, Oregon