

3/27/25

House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

Re: Testimony on HB 2150

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patty Falkenstein, and I am speaking today in my role as a Personal Support Worker for the state of Oregon and a taxpayer. I have concerns about House Bill 2150. The amended bill apparently directs a study of the previous study. This seems like a waste of time and resources. The recommendations from the study included establishing transparent rate models to reflect current costs of delivering services, standardizing total compensation for direct-care workers across systems and services, and creating a new requirement for agencies to report data on worker wages, benefits, and other key metrics.

I have heard in several meetings that the APD POP and budget specifically states no COLA for homecare workers. It would be in my opinion highly inequitable to automatically award "equal or greater COLA" to agencies while forcing the state's own workforce to bargain hard for any increase. This rate gift would be in direct conflict with the study that recommended equity for the same work across the systems.

We can easily surmise this will have a large fiscal impact. There should not be huge differences between the private agencies that pay significantly higher wages- using Medicaid dollars, and the state's own workforce. Private agencies are currently paying between \$26 and \$32 an hour with unlimited overtime. The state pays a base rate of \$20, with capped overtime. This is for performing the same work, and one on one settings. There is a current fraud indictment for Rever Grand, an entity that apparently pocketed 19 million dollars in Medicaid and state funding.

I want the playing field to be level for the same work. Thank you.