

3/27/25

Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: Testimony on SB 133

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patty Falkenstein. I am a Personal Support Worker for the state of Oregon and a taxpayer. I have concerns about Senate Bill 133, as it would be in my opinion highly inequitable to automatically award "equal or greater COLA" to I/DD agencies while forcing the state's own workforce to bargain hard for any increase. This rate gift would be in direct conflict with the Wage and Rate 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.

Sincerely,

Patty Falkenstein