

**To: Chairs Valderrama & Campos, and Members of the Committee**  
**From: Gwendolyn G. Edde**

**Re: Testimony in Support of Regional Family Networks—Specifically CODSN**  
**Date: April 2, 2025**

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### **Regional Family Networks Change Lives—And Save Oregon Money**

I am writing in strong support of Oregon's Regional Family Networks and to highlight the life-changing impact of the **Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN)**—the Regional Family Network serving Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Lake, Klamath, and Wheeler counties.

The efforts of CODSN mainly and also FACT Oregon Regional Family Networks have resulted in the following life improvements for my family:

- An introduction to and increased understanding of ABLE and other money management options and connections to help us be able to provide for our son with I/DD throughout his life, thereby lessening the burden on the State;
- Expanding connections, understanding, and friendships for my son, and separately and also importantly for myself and our family that have increased our wellbeing in an economically efficient and humanly supportive manner;
- An improved understanding of the regulations and diploma options available to my son as he entered high school. As a result, he is on track to graduate with a modified diploma and is coming home talking about his courses including such as the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, and tonight the moral lessons of the Great Gatsby from his Lit/Comp classes, along with science, computer coding, and World Issues and government topics that will help him become a more informed voter and citizen. As a parent, I had to advocate intensively for my son to be able to aim for a modified diploma as the school was steering us towards a completion certificate. Because of the work and knowledge sharing of CODSN in this area:
  - He is on path to earn a modified diploma, which benefits the school district as it counts for graduation rates (unlike the Extended Diploma or Completion Certificate). I have been able to share our path and story to help directly two other families at least lean into higher expectations and a modified or full degree with accommodations for their children.
  - We have increased our expectations for him and he is meeting those by actively participating in general education classes, and school activities such as formal dances, and sports such as the Bowling team and Track, and Unified Sports. Because of these experiences and activities, he is developing lifelong healthier habits that should contribute to lower medical cost needs across his life; and shared connections/understandings with his classmates and friends.
  - And importantly, he is given the opportunity to be a teacher to others, including but not limited to, (a) that various disability is just a part of life and (b) for his

schoolmates and staff to better understand and see him as the amazing fun, kind, joyful individual that he is and the wisdom that he has to share. That knowledge and understanding reduces fear and all of the negative connotations that may come of fear.

CODSN is a trusted, **family-led** organization supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families across Central and Eastern Oregon. From the Warm Springs Reservation to remote Harney County, CODSN ensures families receive not only information—but genuine connection, advocacy, and culturally responsive support.

In the 2023–2024 year alone, CODSN:

- Provided **resources and support to 3,655 families**
- Reached **16,257 attendees** through **228 trainings and events**
- Activated **109 community partners** to improve access and inclusion

In communities where families face deep systemic barriers—fragmented services, inaccessible education, and gaps in youth mental health—CODSN steps in to:

- Offer **culturally and linguistically relevant support**, including multiple Spanish-language groups
- Build inclusive, accessible spaces through **sensory-friendly movie nights, resource fairs**, and emergency preparedness events
- Provide **disability awareness education** to schools, healthcare providers, and local governments
- Deliver **family-driven advocacy** in over **150 statewide and regional committee meetings**.

Regional Family Networks like CODSN create lasting change. They improve outcomes, reduce family isolation, and help Oregon save money by preventing crisis and reducing system strain. These networks are smart investments—and critical supports for thousands of Oregon families.

**We urge you to continue and expand funding for Oregon’s Regional Family Networks. Our communities need them now more than ever.**

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Learn more at: [www.codsn.org](http://www.codsn.org)