

Submitter: Tiffany Yount-Akimoto

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 20

Tiffany Yount-Akimoto

Community Health Worker with Oregon Spinal Cord Injury, Caregiver, and Advocate  
April 3rd, 2025

Oregon State Legislature – Senate Committee, Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama,  
and fellow members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human  
Services,

My name is Tiffany Yount-Akimoto, and I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 20. As a Community Health Worker living with a spinal cord injury, a caregiver for a person with a disability who is employed, and a sibling and child of individuals with disabilities, I have seen firsthand how vital it is to have access to both employment and health insurance. The ability to work should never come at the cost of losing life-saving medical care.

For individuals and families like mine, the constant battle between earning a living and maintaining essential healthcare is a cruel and unnecessary struggle. The current system forces us into impossible choices:

Work more to afford food and basic needs, only to lose critical medical benefits.

Work less to keep insurance, but then struggle to survive financially.

Skip necessary medications to afford groceries or pay for medications and go without meals.

This is not how it should be. No one should have to choose between their health and their ability to provide for themselves and their families.

Senate Bill 20 is a lifeline for working individuals with disabilities and their families. It ensures that access to medical care is not dictated by rigid income limits that punish those trying to be self-sufficient. It allows people with disabilities and caregivers like myself to live with dignity, security, and peace of mind—instead of constant stress over whether working a few extra hours will result in losing healthcare.

As a CHW, I have worked with many individuals and families in similar situations. I have seen too many people forced to turn down job opportunities, limit their potential, or sacrifice their well-being just to remain eligible for the medical care they need to survive. Senate Bill 20 will empower individuals to work without fear, creating a healthier, more productive Oregon for everyone.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 20 and ensure that Oregonians with disabilities—and those who care for them—are not penalized for striving for independence. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to making Oregon a state where everyone can thrive.

Sincerely,  
Tiffany Yount-Akimoto