



State Rehabilitation Council

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Chair Lieber and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council would like to provide testimony on the potential impacts of Senate Bill 20.

The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council is a federally mandated body that partners with the state's Vocational Rehabilitation program to ensure high-quality employment services for individuals with disabilities. The Council represents the voice of those who receive VR services and provides VR with an external, consumer-oriented perspective.

SB 20 amends a Medicaid program for employed individuals with disabilities in Oregon to disregard personal income and resources for eligibility. This type of program is often referred to as a Medicaid Buy-In program and exists in various forms across other states.

If implemented, this bill may have several notable impacts on the lives of Oregonians with disabilities who work. The program may reduce disincentives for individuals with disabilities to seek employment. They would no longer risk losing Medicaid coverage due to increased income. More people with disabilities may seek employment, addressing labor needs in various sectors and increasing economic self-sufficiency, independence and contribute to their communities [as taxpayers].

Consistent healthcare coverage assures employed individuals with disabilities better health outcomes and job retention. Continuity of care aligns with broader public health goals and contributes to reduced healthcare costs in the long term. Increased employment for persons with disabilities reduces reliance on public assistance programs. The program

upfront costs require careful fiscal analysis with longer term benefits to these individuals and the community.

Implementing this program requires coordination between the Department of Human Services, Oregon Health Authority, healthcare providers, and employers. Some individuals' health coverage costs may shift from full Medicaid coverage to this new program, affecting healthcare utilization patterns and costs. Monitoring the costs and outcomes of the program is recommended.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this overview on SB 20. We anticipate benefits to persons with disabilities and the workforce if the bill is passed. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter that could significantly impact on the lives of Oregonians with disabilities.

Signed,

Executive Committee of Oregon State Rehabilitation Council