

April 3, 2025

To: Joint Ways and Means subcommittee Human Resources

From: Melissa Ireland

Dear Committee Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, and fellow members of Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 20 and ask you all to fully fund it within the ODHS budget.

I ask you to imagine for just one minute, what the world would look like if we told our kids when they were young that they would never reach their full potential. If we told them that the first job/ position they took would be as far as they would ever go. That doesn't paint a pretty image, does it?

Luckily, for our society we don't do that. We instead do the direct opposite. We teach our children to study/ work hard, start at the bottom and work their way to the top. We encourage them to reach for the stars, and to chase their dreams.

Medicaid asset and income eligibility restriction for employed people with disabilities limits our disability community. It tells the person "This is all you can ever be." It's unfair, and is not the mindset of our culture.

As a healthcare worker, friend, and family member of several individuals facing these challenges, I see the many ways this barrier impacts their lives, and the lives of their families. I see it directly affects their mental health, and their ability to thrive.

Healthcare benefits should not be at the cost of achieving more, being more, or contributing more.

The individuals I know hurt by this are multi-talented human beings with so much more to offer. I urge you to remove these restrictions by supporting SB20, and give these people so dear to me the opportunity to flourish.

With much appreciation for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Ireland". The signature is written in a light gray or blue ink on a white background.

Melissa Ireland

