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RESOURCES

Vision: All Disabled People Belong. Everywhere.
Mission: We transform workplaces and communities
by championing disability inclusion.

April 4, 2025

Re: Opposition to House Bill 2020 and -3 Amendments

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Munoz, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Jennifer Camota Luebke. I am the President and CEO of Relay Resources. I am also a council member of the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), a board member for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Oregon, an officer on the board of trustees for UCP National, and a board member of American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services (ACCSES). My academic research for my doctorate degree was on disability inclusion in faith-based K-12 schools. I am the mother to an adult son who has an intellectual disability and who has a full-time job, and the wife of a special education teacher / autism specialist. Two years ago I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease, and therefore am now also disabled. I am deeply passionate about, qualified in, and committed to the work of disability inclusion, especially in the workplace.

I am submitting this written testimony to reinforce and supplement my in-person testimony I gave on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, **in opposition to HB 2020**, both the base bill and the bill with the -3 amendments.

Seventy-four years ago, Relay was started as a school by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities during a time when disabled students did not yet have the right to attend public school. **These parents centered their disabled children** and dreamed of a better future for them. The origin story of Relay resonates with me personally because of my experience advocating for my son.

Relay continues to center disabled people in everything we do. We have evolved into an organization focused on employing people with and without disabilities, working side by side in integrated and inclusive work environments. Relay has over 850 employees. Over 500 of our team members have a documented disability, which could be a physical disability, a mental health diagnosis, a neurodivergence such as dyslexia or ADHD, a developmental disability like autism, Down syndrome, or an intellectual disability, or a chronic health condition such as an autoimmune disorder.

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Our front-line janitorial employees are unionized under SEIU. One of the primary reasons that our janitorial employees organized to become a part of the SEIU union is to ensure that they have access to high-quality healthcare benefits. High quality, consistent, and continuing healthcare insurance is extremely important to all employees, and especially for people with disabilities.

Because we center disabled employees in everything we do, we are a proud vendor in the Oregon Forward program, which provides employment opportunities for disabled people who may have previously experienced discrimination in the workplace. We recognize that this program is a vital for employees with disabilities to have self-determination and live full and independent lives.

Relay provides business services such as janitorial, floor care, landscaping, document digitization, and supply chain management.

Relay's customers include the Portland Airport, Portland State University, Bob's Red Mill, Oregon Department of Human Services, and Danner Boots.

Relay centers disabled people in everything we do - in our hiring processes, in the language we use, in providing employee support coaches who proactively provide tools and accommodations that set our disabled team members up for success, and in providing customized workforce training for all of our team members.

Because we center disabled employees in everything we do, we support the part of HB2020 that lowers the Oregon Forward ratio from 60% to 50%. We know that a lower ratio is in the best interests of our disabled and nondisabled employees alike because it supports competitive, integrated workplaces.

Because we center disabled employees in everything we do, we do **not** support the part of HB2020's language regarding a successor employer's obligations on healthcare benefits in the Oregon Forward program. The language as written, even with the -3 amendments, leaves too much room for successor employers to **not provide** employees comparable benefits to the previous employer.

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For example, the amendment states:

“Provide in the new contract that the successor service provider must reimburse individuals with disabilities who were employed under the contract that was terminated or not renewed...”

When employees are making \$19/hour or \$20/hour, a COBRA payment of several hundred dollars is a significant amount in proportion to their wages, and there is a risk that they could not make those payments if they have to first make the COBRA payment, and then wait to be reimbursed. The language is not specific in the bill that employees will not be out of pocket for their COBRA payment.

Another example is that there is no language or mechanism in the bill that ensures the **enforcement** of employees enrolling in a comparable or better health care plan with the successor employer. The bill proposes that successor employers will pay for COBRA, and then during the next open enrollment, change the healthcare coverage such that is comparable to the previous employer’s plan, and available for all of their employees. The longer that a successor employer waits to change their insurance plan, the less likely this intended change will be made. If the successor vendor does not make the change, there is currently no enforcement mechanism. We recommend that employers in the Oregon Forward program change their healthcare benefits proactively, in advance of agreeing to taking on a contract held by a previous Oregon Forward vendor, thereby ensuring that there is no negative impact to employees regarding healthcare benefits.

Because we center disabled employees in everything we do, we cannot support this amendment **as written**, because of the risk to the continuity of comparable benefits for employees in the Oregon Forward program. Regardless of who services the contract, disabled employees should not be at risk of harm due to a lower standard of benefits, or due to potentially being out of pocket to pay for their COBRA benefits, or potentially having a gap caused by not being able to pay for COBRA benefits before they are reimbursed.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Camota Luebke