



To: Joint Subcommittee on Human Services

From: Allyse Lee

Date: April 2, 2025

RE: ODHS HB 5526

Dear Co-chair Valderrama, Co-chair Campos, and members of the committee,

My name is Allyse Lee, and I am writing in support of the Governor's investment in both the Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) programs to continue to focus on prevention as well as home and community-based care as an ongoing priority.

SEIU 503 supports the following POPs:

- POP 101 Strengthening Safety and Regulatory Oversight
- POP 103 Access Rule (CMS)
- POP 114 Person-Centered Service Planning and Workload model
- POP 560 Ensuring access to services for individuals with mental health conditions

I've worked for the state of Oregon under Aging and People with Disabilities for 9 years now serving Coos and Curry counties in multiple roles and now work out of the APD Disability Determination Services office in Salem. Prior to working in Oregon I've helped serve intellectually and developmentally disabled adults in Minnesota and California.

Investments in regulatory staffing for APD and I/DD ensure that Oregonians remain safe and receive the appropriate level of care. This includes additional operations funding to implement the new CMS access rule, which has a critical focus on home and community-based services. Workers already carry heavy caseloads, and, without additional workers, these vulnerable populations may experience slower services.

When I was a Case Manager at APD in Coos and Curry, I worked to ensure that our most vulnerable seniors and disabled folks got appropriate level of care and respected their choices. Folks wanted to stay in their homes as long as possible and when that level of care escalated to needing assisted living, foster home, or even nursing home level of care it

was a lot to coordinate and often there were not openings available. Imagine your grandparent or parent as they age, the dignity needed to help respect their choices but also provide supports to keep them alive and thriving as long as possible. Some folks had overlapping issues with mental health and physical limits and often we were underprepared with how best to meet all their needs. There are more and more Oregonians needing long term care and disability supports.

Currently, I work as a Disability Analyst and I determine medical SSA disability for Oregonians statewide. We have complex policy as its federally applied as well as working for the state of Oregon and have about 90 disability analysts like myself, yet we have embarrassing long wait times and pending cases on backlogs. Our current priority are cases that are 460+ days with the agency pending review which means a person has waited over a year to get their decision. We need to do better to serve our Oregonians and with these POPs, it's a pathway to ensure this can be achieved.

The budget includes funds for positions to enable review for newly licensed or changed ownership community-based care facilities. The budget reallocates Quality Care Fund resources to support provider workforce training and Safety, Oversight and Quality operations. The budget also reallocates mental health funding to enhance access to long term services and support for individuals with behavioral health conditions.

In summary, adequate staffing levels and proper training is critical to serving vulnerable Oregonians. Please support investments in APD and I/DD programs.

Thank you,

Allyse Lee

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SEIU 503 member and ODHS/APD/DDS Disability Analyst