

Submitter: Kyle Durkee
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Chair, members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kyle Durkee, and I've worked as a homecare provider in Salem, Oregon for the past eight years. I'm here to voice my strong support for medicaid funding, because I've seen firsthand how critical Medicaid-funded care is—for both the workers who provide it and the people who rely on it to survive with dignity. In those eight years, I've cared for elders, people with disabilities, and even my own ailing parent until they passed—all while facing the same economic pressures that so many of us in this field live with. I've skipped meals to keep the lights on. I've worn clothes until they fell apart. And through all of that, I kept showing up—because care work is more than a job. It's a lifeline.

But this work can't happen without support. Without Medicaid funding, the people we serve are at risk of losing everything—their homes, their independence, their health, and sometimes even their lives.

I understand that these decisions aren't easy. And I don't expect every person in this room to have lived the kinds of struggle that many of us have. But that's exactly why you need to hear from us—because those closest to the pain are also closest to the truth. And the truth is: without funding for Medicaid many of our clients will be pushed into crisis or onto the streets.

This funding doesn't just keep the system running. It affirms that care matters. That people matter. That dignity isn't optional.

I urge you—please support funding these programs. Protect Medicaid. Protect the people who depend on it. And ensure that both workers and clients are treated with the respect and stability they deserve