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

Children with complex medical needs require consistent, skilled, and compassionate care. Yet Oregon's current system often fails to provide this. Families frequently report that paid caregivers are challenging to find, and when they are available, high turnover and inadequate training can create disruptions in care. These breaks in continuity can lead to serious consequences for a medically fragile child: missed medications, medical errors, emotional distress, and regression in developmental progress.

Senate Bill 538 (Tensy's Law) addresses this urgent problem by allowing parents to be paid caregivers for their children with extraordinary needs. Parents are often the most qualified individuals to provide care—they know the child's medical history, understand their communication cues, and have usually spent years learning complex medical procedures at home. SB 538 simply acknowledges this reality and ensures families have the option to rely on their most experienced and committed caregiver: the parent.

Continuity of care isn't just about consistency in faces—it's about trust, safety, and long-term wellbeing. Children with disabilities often have heightened anxiety or difficulty adapting to new routines and unfamiliar people. Constantly cycling through temporary or ill-suited providers can be traumatizing. In contrast, care provided by a loving and knowledgeable parent offers stability and emotional security, essential for a child's health.

This bill does not mandate that parents be paid caregivers—it only allows it as an option when other caregivers are unavailable or unsuitable. It fills in the gaps of a strained system and improves the quality of care children receive. It also supports workforce development by ensuring that no authorized care hours go unused simply because a professional provider cannot be found.

By passing SB 538, Oregon can ensure continuity, dignity, and excellence in care for its most vulnerable children. Let's recognize and support the people already doing this vital work—parents.