

Opposition to 3838 Workforce Standard Board

Attn: Esteemed Members of the House Committee on Rules

My Name is Josh Bearman, the Executive Director at TVW Inc. I have worked in this industry for 20 years and strongly oppose 3838.

3838 is the wrong answer to supporting people with disabilities and increasing wages for Direct Support Workers (DSP).

The real answer: The State legislation has a DSP rate study commissioned by the legislative body. It outlines the fiscal need to pay DSPs a fair wage in Oregon. We know what the answer is. It's time for our state leaders to make it a reality.

I watched this morning, Monday, April 28th, 2025, when Amanda Dalton reminded the House Committee on Rules that a signed union caregiver contract with the state included an agreement restricting State agencies from supporting rate increases for DSPs. You have to ask yourself why a group so focused on improving wages for DSPs would add a clause in their contract with the state to disallow the state from supporting wage increases. That hurt us; it hurt all agencies in Oregon while we are tirelessly fighting for better wages for our staff.

We do not need an additional Wage Board to tell us what we already know. We need the state to support Medicaid rates that pay workers a living and professional wage. 3838 will waste valuable time and disrupt the critical work of Oregon's nonprofits, which will only do more harm. Today, the supporters of 3838 said we might not see rate changes until 2030. How is this progress? If you want to help DSPs and the people they serve, fund the rate study and add a cost-of-living increase. This is the straightforward, proven, studied solution to the problem.

We do not need a special interest group to tell us how to improve our system. We have known about the rate problem for years, and the State rate study confirmed it. Every session, we come to the capitol to remind lawmakers to assist us with our rates. We cannot raise the prices of our services to pay employees more; the State also sets those rates. So, as costs rise and wages rise, we operate our Medicaid program at a deficit every year.

Our elected body needs to support livable wages for Direct Support Workers today. This isn't work that can be delegated to a Board with other special interests. Please refer to the rate study, listen to your local nonprofits, and act now and oppose 3838.

Thank you,

Josh Bearman