



A STRONG VOICE

FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

To: Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Pham and Drazen, and Members of the Committee:
FR: Tan Perkins, Oregon AFL-CIO
RE: Support HB 3838-3
Date: 04/29/25

My name is Tan Perkins with the Oregon AFL-CIO, we represent over 300,000 workers and their families and strive to be a voice for all workers in the legislative process. I am writing today in strong support of **HB 3838-3** to establish a Workforce Standards Board in the Long-term Care Industry.

We believe that all workers deserve livable wages, health care, and family supporting benefits. There is a crisis in care—one that is harming workers and putting vulnerable Oregonians at risk. HB 3838-3 provides a real solution: a Workforce Standards Board that will help to craft actual standards for these workers.

For too long, care workers have been treated as disposable, even though they provide essential services to seniors and people with disabilities. Wages are so low that nearly half of direct care workers rely on public assistance just to survive. Many receive no benefits or cannot afford the ones offered. With pay as low as \$15.75 per hour and little job stability, it's no surprise that the industry faces a 51% turnover rate. This level of instability is unsustainable. Oregon needs 65,000 more care providers by 2030, yet we cannot recruit or retain the workforce we have now. Without immediate action, we will see even more Oregonians go without the care they need.

A Workforce Standards Board will stabilize the workforce by ensuring fair wages, benefits, and training—reducing long-term costs while improving retention and care outcomes. We have seen this approach succeed in other states, leading to higher wages, better training, and improved working conditions.

This bill is also a matter of justice. When federal labor laws were written in 1938, domestic workers—who were overwhelmingly Black women—were deliberately excluded from labor protections. Those exclusions have never been fully corrected. Today, care workers—who are still disproportionately women, people of color, and immigrants—are denied fair wages and a voice in their working conditions. HB 3838-3 is



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a long-overdue step toward reversing that history and ensuring that all care workers receive the dignity, respect, and protections they deserve.

No worker should be overlooked or treated as lesser just due to their profession. We will all get old, we will all need care, we should all care that those taking care of us are able to take care of themselves. There is no job that is beneath basic benefits and wages. We strongly ask you to support this policy and the workers and their families.

Sincerely,
Tan Perkins
Oregon AFL-CIO