

April 29, 2025

HB 3838

Representative Bowman, Vice Chairs and members of the committee,

My name is Brandon Wheeler. I am the Chief Executive Officer of Supported Living Foundations. We are a Medicaid Provider Agency that supports adults who experience I/DD in their own homes or family homes. Our agency is represented by the Community Providers Association of Oregon (CPAO), along with about 50 other community provider organizations. I started in this field in 2013 as a Direct Support Professional. I have served this field in many different roles in the last 12 years, from direct support to management to administrative and executive positions. I feel I have a unique skillset in understanding not only the needs of the individuals we support, but also the people who support them.

I am writing today in strong opposition of HB3838. Community provider organizations receiving state and federal funding have the responsibility of being good stewards of our resources. This bill creates unnecessary and duplicative regulation, creates costly administrative overhead and quite frankly is not good stewardship.

Providers already stretch every dollar to ensure they are providing their staff with the best wages, benefits, working conditions and support they can with the funds they receive. My colleagues and I all know if we don't take good care of our employees, we can't expect them to deliver quality supports to those we all serve. We each do this in unique ways, with a variety of creative benefits that strive to meet the needs of our staff.

Organizations such as mine each have their own culture, traditions and things we know our Direct Support Professionals value in their employers. Dictating how organizations support their employees strips us of our uniqueness. We will be forced to cut things we know our employees value in order to comply with the expectations set forth in this bill.

Many employees stay with their organizations because of the sense of belonging, support, opportunity for growth and commitment to those we serve. Watering down the reasons why people stay will ultimately be the demise of our service delivery system.

Not only do staff choose a provider they feel fits their own values, so do supported individuals. Creating regulation that forces organizations to essentially be the same from one to the next is a huge disservice to Oregonians who experience intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. It actually limits individual choice, along with our abilities to personalize the supports every organization creates a niche to provide.

The goal is to ensure people receive high quality support and services based on their choices for how and where they want to live. The framework and regulation is already in place for that, it just needs to be funded fairly and appropriately. Please consider doing that, instead of reinventing the wheel while underfunding this highly needed workforce and creating barriers to keep it at adequately levels.

Thank you,

Brandon Wheeler

CPAO Agency Member