

**DEB PATTERSON  
STATE SENATOR  
DISTRICT 10**



**OREGON STATE SENATE**

13 May 2025

Senate President Rob Wagner  
Speaker Julie Fahey  
Majority Leader Kayse Jama  
Minority Leader Daniel Bonham  
Majority Leader Ben Bowman  
Minority Leader Christine Drazan  
Co-Chair Kate Lieber  
Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez

**Re: Support Tensy's Law, Senate Bill 538**

Dear President Wagner, Speaker Fahey, Leader Jama, Leader Bonham, Leader Bowman, Leader Drazan, Co-Chair Lieber, and Co-Chair Sanchez,

In 2023, the Oregon Legislative Assembly created a way for a limited number of parents with high-needs children to serve as home care providers. We ask for your support to fully implement this program to allow all parents with high-needs children to participate. Oregon families need greater access to Home and Community Based Services, which have been proven to be more cost-effective than alternative offerings such as foster care, group homes, and long-term hospitalization.

Senate Bill 538, or Tensy's Law, is named in honor of one of the more than 1,500 children on the waitlist for the Children's Extraordinary Needs (CEN) waiver, which only has 155 available spots. Tensy is a 10-year-old boy who has already had two cardiac arrests and anoxic brain injuries due to complications from a genetic condition. He is not expected to survive to age 18 when Oregon says his parents could be paid for their caregiving labor. We need to pass this bill so children like Tensy have access to their promised services now. A staggering 90 percent of eligible children are still unable to access the CEN waiver. These children have been assessed to need care far beyond typical parenting workloads, yet their families are forced to wait for a solution. Tensy's Law would address this by allowing all eligible children a spot in the CEN waiver.

Data from the Oregon Health Authority shows that in just the first six months of the CEN waiver, the randomly selected participants had 30.4 percent fewer provider visits than similarly situated children on the waitlist. This demonstrates how effective this solution is at keeping children healthier at home. Additionally, as all these children also qualify for the Oregon Health Plan, this access to consistent quality home care is already saving the state money.

Tensy's Law has no organized opposition and aligns with the stated goals of the Governor's Office and Budget Co-Chairs: to stabilize families, improve access to health care, and invest in our children. It has been endorsed by a broad coalition including Oregon AFSCME, SEIU Local 503, the Oregon Association of Home Care, the System of Care Advisory Council, the Oregon chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Autism Society of Oregon, UCP Oregon, the Oregon Nurses Association, the Oregon Pediatric Society, Our Children Oregon, and Prevent Child Abuse Oregon.

Taxpayers get a double bang for their buck — parents provide the required care, and the income they receive for doing so stabilizes their families and improves their children's trajectories. It's past time for Oregon to join states like Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, Ohio, and many others in allowing parents to work as personal support workers or direct support professionals for their own children. This is a commonsense policy that is a fair and efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 538, Tensy's Law.

Sincerely,



Senator Deb Patterson



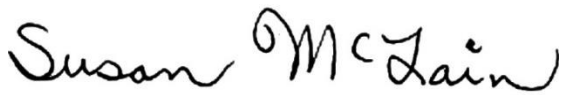
Senator James Manning Jr.



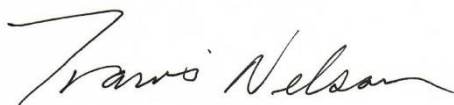
Senator Todd Nash



Representative Tom Andersen



Representative Susan McLain



Representative Travis Nelson



Senator Courtney Neron Misslin



Senator Cedric Hayden



Senator Kim Thatcher



Representative Farrah Chaichi



Representative Rob Nosse