



February 6, 2026

To: Representative Nosse, Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Health Care

From: Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: House Bill 4040 Opposition to Paid Parents as PSWs

To Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Diehl, and Vice-Chair Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (“DD Coalition”) is opposed to the provision of the Health Care Omnibus bill that would permit parents paid to provide caregiving under the Children with Extraordinary Needs (CEN) program to serve as Personal Support Workers (PSWs) instead of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). While parents may currently serve as DSPs connected to a provider agency, the proposed concept would permit them to provide caregiving without key support or oversight that an agency provides.

Every child deserves the in-home supports they need while maximizing opportunities to develop independence and self-determination. Many children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) rely on third-party care providers to gain confidence in their own independence. Paying parents to provide care changes that dynamic. It changes the role of the parent. The involvement of provider agencies offers checks and balances on the role of a parent versus that of a provider. A concept to pay parents as PSWs instead of DSPs takes away those checks and balances.

We have listened to stories of self-advocates with disabilities that describe some of the conflicts in goals and values with their parent caregivers. Provider agencies help parents who are DSPs

- Navigate those conflicts in goals and values
- Represent the interests of the child to understand their rights
- Maintain the child’s welfare
- Build a support network and offer backup
- Teach parents and children about self-advocacy

Omnibus concepts should be those that are non-controversial; however, the concept to pay parents as PSWs is highly controversial. This controversy has been talked about before by the Legislature with far more opportunity for public input than a Short Session can provide.¹

¹ The Coalition fails to see the level of meaningful public engagement such a concept deserves when scheduling HB 4040, which itself contains 23 separate concepts, alongside seven other public hearings on the same day.



Legislators then made the decision that they should be making again now—that paid parents should be DSPs not PSWs.

The bill as introduced is also confusing in that states that parents paid as PSWs must be paid at the same rate as those employed as DSPs. The problem with that is that the rates of pay for DSPs vary and right now PSWs have a higher per hour wage under collective bargaining than is provided for DSPs under the ODDS rate model. DSPs also are not all paid alike, as large agency providers pay higher incomes that the best small nonprofit providers cannot. It would require reassessing wage rates regularly, and it is not clear how a “comparable” rate is determined.

The Dash 9 Amendment attempts to address that issue by specifying that the PSW be paid the same rate as “personal support workers who are not parent providers.” It is still unclear how a “comparable” rate would be determined. Paying parents under the CEN program at PSW rates aligned with a collective bargaining agreement raises questions with respect to purported long-term cost savings that must be analyzed. It also creates administrative and policy challenges. As noted above, the PSW pay scale is structured via collective bargaining with increasing “steps” depending on the number of hours worked and additional differentials for credentials and specialties. How would the number of hours used to calculate base wage and “step” determinations be measured? Would it become another factor subject to further renegotiation through collective bargaining? Parents paid as PSWs would still fall under the collective bargaining agreement, so the state may have increased administrative overhead to implement (and possibly renegotiate) CBA terms, track steps, and manage compliance.

The bottom line, however, is that monitoring service delivery and fostering a child’s right to self-determination becomes more difficult when paying parents as PSWs. The fact that parents were paid as PSWs during the pandemic era is not sufficient evidence that re-instituting the program would be successful. Pandemic restrictions limited outside contact as in-person case management and monitoring were scaled back. Children had fewer opportunities to voice concerns. The context of public health emergency and the limited duration also tell us very little about the long-term impact on autonomy or choice for the children at large.

For all of the reasons outline above, the DD Coalition urges you to remove the provision that would allow parents to be paid to provide caregiving as PSWs instead of DSPs from HB 4040.

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 30 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity, and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Our members include the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (a statewide coalition of people with I/DD or “self-advocates”), peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations, and developmental disability providers.