



Oregon State Legislature

Public Hearing: Senate Bill 1505

WHY SB 1505 MISSES THE MARK FOR OREGON'S IDD COMMUNITY



Wednesday, February 4, 2026, Carrie Howell, Executive Director of Chamberlin House, testified on behalf of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) services and the Community Provider Association of Oregon in opposition to SB 1505. Her message was clear and urgent: while the bill's intent may be to strengthen the workforce, its real-world impact could further destabilize an already fragile system.

A FRAGILE SYSTEM UNDER PRESSURE

Oregon's Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) sector is facing persistent challenges—chief among them, unstable and insufficient funding. Providers across the state are struggling to recruit and retain Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), the backbone of services for people with disabilities.

At a time when providers are relying on promised rate increases in the second year of the biennium, introducing a new regulatory body risks diverting attention from what truly matters: securing sustainable funding and strengthening existing systems.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS VS. DIRECT IMPACT

One of the major concerns raised about SB 1505 is the creation of a Workforce Standards Board, which would come with significant administrative costs. These costs don't exist in a vacuum—they would inevitably divert funds away from the very people we are trying to support.

According to the latest Burns and Associates rate study, Oregon's current funding model only covers about 70% of the actual cost of services. In this context, adding a new layer of oversight is not just inefficient—it's counterproductive.

Instead of spending limited resources on bureaucracy, those funds should be directed toward:

- Increasing DSP wages
- Improving benefits
- Supporting workforce retention

These are the investments that directly and measurably impact service quality and stability.

PRIVACY AND WORKFORCE CONCERNS

Another troubling aspect of SB 1505 is the requirement that providers disclose workers' names and addresses. This raises serious privacy concerns and could deter potential employees from entering the field altogether.

Even the proposed opt-out process introduces new administrative burdens—more time, more paperwork, and more resources pulled away from direct services.

REDUNDANT AND RISKY COMPLIANCE

Providers have spent years cultivating positive, inclusive work environments that promote respect, belonging, and professional growth. These efforts are essential for employee satisfaction and long-term retention.

The new board's redundant compliance requirements threaten to undermine this progress by:

- Increasing Administrative Workload
- Contributing to staff burnout
- Accelerating turnover

Ironically, a bill intended to protect workers could end up driving them away.

EXISTING PROTECTIONS ALREADY EXIST

It's also important to note that DSPs are already protected under existing labor laws, including oversight from the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Creating a new board risks introducing confusion, delays, and bureaucratic obstacles in personnel decisions that need to be handled quickly and effectively.

THE REAL QUESTION: PRIORITIES

As Carrie Howell emphasized in her closing remarks:

This is not a question of whether we value Direct Support Professionals—we all do. It's a question of how we use limited resources.

Oregon's IDD system doesn't need more boards. It needs more funding, better wages, and stronger support for the workforce already doing the work.

If we truly want to stabilize this system and protect the people who rely on these services, we must invest in people, not paperwork.