



**DISABILITY
HEALTH & EMPLOYMENT
EQUITY COALITION**

The [Oregon Disability Health and Employment Equity Coalition](#) supports legislation ([SB 576](#)) that will allow Oregonians with disabilities to work, earn, and save like any other Oregonian, while also maintaining their private insurance and eligibility for health care and long-term supports and services (LTSS) through Medicaid. Stated another way, it will eliminate asset and income eligibility caps for employed people with disabilities. You can learn more about why we need SB 576 [here](#).

The hearing for SB 576 has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 8th from 3:00 – 4:30pm in the Senate Human Services Committee, we are asking interested advocates, family members and providers to submit written testimony through the [Committee's online site](#). You can receive an alert for that hearing by e-subscribing to the bill at its landing page using this hyperlink, [SB 576](#).

We need your help to support this critical legislation during the 2023 Legislature session.

1. Contact your legislators and ask them to support this bill.
 - Go to <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/> to find your legislator and updated information on any legislation, including SB 576.
 - Call Toll-Free Legislative Assembly Access Number, 1-800-332-2313. If you don't know your state representative and/or senator, you will be helped to identify them and your call will be routed to their office.
2. Submit written testimony supporting SB 576 by sharing your story of how this legislation would benefit your life or those around you.
 - Go to: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/SB576> . At the top you will see a tab that says 'Submit Testimony'. You can upload your testimony up to February 9th at 3PM.



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Why Do We Need SB 576?

Employed Oregonians with disabilities currently face a tough choice. They need Medicaid for critical healthcare and LTSS. But because of asset and income limitations, they cannot pursue career advancement opportunities, must forego pay raises and job promotions, and face limitations to create greater personal assets, because they are at risk of losing their public benefits. The financial and health security for workers with disabilities is being suppressed by systemic barriers. Medicaid asset and income eligibility restrictions for employed people with disabilities limit their ability to prosper through employment and exposes them and their families to financial and health disparities.

Currently, the Employed Persons with Disabilities Program lets people work and keep Medicaid benefits, as long as they have W-2 income with FICA and Medicare withholdings. They remain eligible for the Oregon Health Plan and in-home or community based care based on their need for assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs). Participants must pay into the program based on a sliding scale according to their income. Assets are limited to \$5,000. If either limit is exceeded, the worker is disqualified from EPD and must choose whether to continue working without Medicaid, or to stop working in order to keep Medicaid.

As a result, we are again seeking solutions through support of SB 576 in the 2023 Legislature to obtain the Medicaid coverage workers with disabilities need while allowing them the independence, dignity, and choice of work to earn a steady income. During the 2021 Legislative Session, advocates submitted SB 584 to address this problem. It died in the Ways and Means Committee.

SB 576 will allow people with disabilities to work and maintain private or public health insurance and also remain eligible for Medicaid coverage for their LTSS needs. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) will expand the program that provides Medicaid to employed individuals with disabilities, including coordination of benefits if that person has employer-sponsored coverage.

Other states have already implemented similar solutions. Some states have modified their income and/or resource limits to be more generous than Oregon is to its workers with disabilities. The state of Washington has eliminated all limits to income and resources.



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Strategic Pathway to Passage

SB 576 has been assigned to Senate Human Services Committee where its chief sponsor and champion, Senator Gelser Blouin, is the Chair. There do not seem to be any roadblocks to passage out of the Senate committee. It will then be referred to the Ways and Means

Committee and be assigned to the Human Services Subcommittee where Senator Gelser Blouin is also a member.

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The membership of the Senate Human Services Committee and their contact information is as follows:

Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin, Chair Sen.SaraGelser@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1708
Sen. Art Robinson, Vice Chair Sen.ArtRobinson@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1702
Sen. James Manning, Jr. Sen.JamesManning@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1707
Sen. Suzanne Weber Sen.SuzanneWeber@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1716
Sen. Floyd Prozanski Sen.FloydProzanski@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1704

After the bill's Do Pass recommendation out of the Senate Human Services Committee, our principle advocacy efforts will be turned to the [Joint Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee](#), which will have the ultimate decision-making authority about whether to recommend the passage and funding of SB 576 to the full Joint Ways and Means Committee.

The membership of the Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee is as follows:

Sen. Winsvey Campos, Co-Chair Sen.WinsveyCampos@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1718
Rep. Andrea Valderrama, Co-Chair, Rep.AndreaValderrama@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1447
Rep. Ben Bowman Rep.BenBowman@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1425



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Rep. Ed Diehl
Rep.EdDiehl@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1417

Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin
Sen.SaraGelser@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1708

Rep. Christine Goodwin
Rep.ChristineGoodwin@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1404

Sen. Cedric Hayden
Sen.CedricHayden@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1706

Rep. Hai Pham
Rep.HaiPham@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1436

The membership of the full Joint Ways and Means Committee is as follows:

Sen. Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
Sen.ElizabethSteiner@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1717

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Rep.TawnaSanchez@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1443

Sen. Fred Girod, Co-Vice Chair
Sen.FredGirod@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1709

Rep. David Gomberg, Co-Vice Chair
Rep.DavidGomberg@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1410

Rep. Greg Smith, Co-Vice Chair
Rep.GregSmith@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1457

Sen. Dick Anderson
Sen.DickAnderson@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1705

Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson
Rep.VikkiBreeseliverson@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1459

Sen. Wlnsvey Campos
Sen.WlnsveyCampos@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1718

Rep. Jamie Cate
Rep.JamiCate@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1411

Sen. Michael Dembrow
Sen.MichaelDembrow@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1723

Rep. Paul Evans
Rep.PaulEvans@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1420

Sen. Lynn Findley
Sen.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1730

Sen. Lew Frederick
Sen.LewFrederick@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1722

Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin
Sen.SaraGelser@oregonlegislature.gov 503-986-1708

Sen. Bill Hansell



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Sen.BillHansell@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1729
Rep. Paul Holvey	
Rep.PaulHolvey@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1408
Sen. Tim Knopp	
Sen.TimKnopp@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1727
Rep. Susan McClain	
Rep.SusanMclain@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1425
Rep. Khanh Pham	
Rep.KhanhPham@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1446
Rep. Werner Reschke	
Rep.EWarnerReschke@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1455
Rep. David Brock Smith	
Rep.DavidBrockSmith@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1457
Sen. Janeen Sollman	
Sen.JaneenSollman@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1715
Rep. Andrea Valderama	
Rep.AndreaValderrama@oregonlegislature.gov	503-986-1447

Legislative Advocacy Tips

The Oregon Disability Health and Employment Equity Coalition has a critical mission to support Oregonians with disabilities being allowed to work and have a career, to maintain private or public insurance and remain eligible for the Medicaid long-term supports and services (LTSS) they need. Our tough advocacy battle can only be achieved through a coordinated statewide advocacy effort that involves all members of the disability community around the state and their advocates.

We are asking disability advocates, family members and providers to support SB 576 through phone calling, letter/email communications, and where possible, personal or remote visitation with legislators and their staffs. We hope that every legislator on pertinent committees, as well as legislative leadership, receives numerous contacts in support of SB 576. There will be strategic times when support will be most critical, such as during a committee work session when votes are needed to pass SB 576 out of Committee or when other important actions are to be taken by the full Senate or House chambers.

<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/> can be a most useful website. Not only can you find state representatives and senators, but you can also get updated information on any legislation, including SB 576. If you do not know who your Legislators are, they and their contact information is easy to learn. There is a search box on the lower right side of this homepage that says "Find Your District and Legislators." Enter your complete physical address (house number, street, city, state and zip code), a split screen will pop out with your Legislators on the left side and your



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District maps on the right side. Each of your Legislators' address, phone and email information is listed in their respective box. If you already know your Legislators' names, at the top of this page are drop down menus for the Senate and House. Each menu has three columns. In the first column select All Senators/Representatives. An alphabetized list will appear with contact information for each Senator/Representative.

Here' are some tips that will be helpful in contacting your legislators and their staff:

Advocacy by Phone

Calling legislative offices through the Toll-Free Legislative Assembly Access Number, 1-800-332-2313 or 2316 is effective too. If you don't know your state representative and/or senator, you will be helped to identify them and your call will be routed to their office. If you are unable to visit or do a ZOOM call with your legislator, a phone call is the next best thing. If the legislator is not available, it is equally helpful to talk to their legislative staff to state your position. They will likely be doing most of the leg-work on the bill. These calls have impact. Not only is important information transmitted, but a record is kept of the number of calls made for and against an issue. And you must always count on the fact that the opposition will be making a lot of phone calls.

Some helpful phone calling tips:

- Either the Legislative Aide or their voicemail will answer. Identify yourself and where you are from, especially if you are a constituent.
- Clearly state the bill number.
- Succinctly state your position on the issue. Emphasize your own personal experience and how this legislation will help seniors and other consumers. Ask for the legislators support on the legislation.
- Ask for the legislator's position on the issue. Don't argue if that position is not supportive. Simply provide information that you think may be useful to him/her/them. Don't be negative or threatening.
- It is unlikely the legislator will be immediately available. But feel comfortable discussing your perspective with legislative staff, who will likely be working on the issue. If neither are available, you should attempt to call back. In the meantime, leave a message identifying yourself, the bill number, and how you would like the legislator to vote.



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Advocacy by Email or Letter

Emails/letters can have a critical impact on a legislator's view on a particular issue. There will be surprisingly few letters on a bill from constituents, even on important issues. So 6-12 letters on a particular subject can begin to look like a movement. Here are some guidelines:

- Write letters/emails in your own words. Although emails are more convenient and prompt, handwritten letters can also be effective. Do not use or copy form letters verbatim.
- Clearly and succinctly state the bill number and your position on the issue. Introduce yourself by name and where you live. Very briefly describe yourself. Use two or three talking points from a prepared list. Emphasize your own personal experience, how this issue has affected you and/or your family and how the legislation will help workers with disabilities. Ask for the legislator's support. Leave your contact information. Attach a Coalition hand-out and provide the website URL.
- Always be respectful. Refer to them by their title, "Senator ____" or "Representative ____". Thank them for their time and consideration.
- If a legislator ends up voting for our bill, send a note/email thanking him/her/them for the support. It is nice for a legislator to receive a positive correspondence on occasion. Doing so will strengthen your relationship and effectiveness as an advocate.
- Letters can be addressed to: Senator (or Rep.) , State Capitol, Salem, 97301.

Personal Visits

One of the most effective ways to engage a legislator is by personal contact. This can occur in their office at the State Capitol, virtual meetings like ZOOM or when they are back in the District, possibly at a Town Hall. Remote and in-person visits in a legislator's Salem office is more realistic during the session, because legislative work requires them to be in Salem full-time. When planning a Salem trip, try to do it on a day when you can visit both your representative and senator and potentially other legislators as well. To maximize your impact:

- Make an appointment ahead of time and be on time or a few minutes early for the appointment. Each legislator has a frantic schedule and you do not want to lose an opportunity to present our perspective. However, there is a possibility the legislator might not be on time due to unanticipated meetings, extended hearings, etc.
- Keep your visits as short as possible, no more than 10-15 minutes. Team up with someone that also knows the issue. Clearly summarize the issue/legislation, the reasons this bill will benefit employed people with disabilities and the general public and which



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groups are support it. Be short and to the point. Relax and be yourself. Be prepared; rehearse your remarks and bring materials. Be professional. Keep chit-chat to a minimum. Do not dress too casually. Be attentive to using their legislative title. Never take for granted that a legislator is knowledgeable on a particular issue, even if they show sign of familiarity. In addition, let the legislator know if you are a constituent or have any other political, business, social or family tie to the legislation that may exist.

- If you are asked a question, don't panic. Answer as best you can. Refer to Coalition talking points and materials. If you do not know the answer, that is okay. Tell the Legislator you will get back to them with an answer. And make sure that you do.
- Present the legislator with a SB 576 Fact Sheet and a copy of the bill. Do not expect them to remember everything you say, considering it is probably one of dozens of issues they must deal with at that time. The information you provide will go into the bill file and will be available for reference at a later time.
- Talk to legislative staff, preferably the legislative assistant, and present the same information and materials. Establishing a relationship with key staff is very important. They typically have the ear and the confidence of the legislator and are often more accessible.
- Write a thank you letter to the legislator, which will also give you the opportunity to again provide a summary of our position.

We hope this information is helpful and we look forward to your active involvement in the passage of SB 576. For more information, contact the Coalition Legislative Co-Chairs, John Curtis, johndcurtis14370@gmail.com, or Jim Davis, davisjasr503@gmail.com.