

Enrolled

House Joint Resolution 25

Sponsored by Representative DALTO (at the request of Community Providers Association of Oregon)

Whereas in the United States, more than 8,000,000 Americans have mental retardation or other developmental disabilities, 34,991,754 Americans are 65 years of age or older, 15,000,000 Americans have a severe mental illness or disability and 9,252,138 Americans have a physical disability; and

Whereas in Oregon, approximately 13,537 Oregonians have mental retardation or other developmental disabilities, 19,880 Oregonians are 65 years of age or older, 210,000 Oregonians have a severe mental illness or disability and 8,437 Oregonians have a physical disability; and

Whereas individuals with disabilities and those in the aging community have substantial limitations in their functional capacities, including limitations in two or more of the areas of self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning mobility, self-direction, independent living, economic self-sufficiency and the continuous need for individually planned and coordinated services; and

Whereas for the past two decades individuals with disabilities and those in the aging community and their families have increasingly expressed their desire to live and work in their communities, joining the mainstream of American life; and

Whereas the United States Supreme Court, in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999), affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities and those in the aging community to receive community-based services as an alternative to institutional care; and

Whereas the demand for community support and services is rapidly growing as Oregon continues to identify more individuals as eligible for services; and

Whereas the demand for community support and services will continue to grow as family caregivers age, individuals with disabilities as well as the general population live longer and services expand; and

Whereas outside of families, private providers that employ direct support professionals deliver the majority of support and services for individuals with disabilities and the aging community; and

Whereas direct support professionals provide a wide range of support services to individuals with disabilities and the aging community on a day-to-day basis, including habilitation, health needs, personal care, hygiene, employment, transportation, recreation, housekeeping and other home management-related support and services, so that these individuals can live, work and otherwise contribute to their communities; and

Whereas direct support professionals generally assist individuals with disabilities and the aging community to lead a self-directed family, community and social life; and

Whereas as a result of the growing crisis in recruiting and retaining direct support professionals, private providers and the individuals for whom they provide support and services are in jeopardy; and

Whereas private providers of support and services to individuals with disabilities and the aging community typically draw from a labor market that competes with other entry-level jobs that provide less physically and emotionally demanding work, higher pay and other benefits and therefore these entry-level direct support jobs are not competitive in today's labor market; and

Whereas annual turnover rates of direct support professionals range from 40 percent to 75 percent; and

Whereas high rates of employee vacancies and turnover threaten the ability of private providers to achieve their core mission, which is the provision of safe and high-quality support to individuals with disabilities and the aging community; and

Whereas the turnover of direct support professionals is emotionally difficult for the individuals being served; and

Whereas many parents and other family members are becoming increasingly afraid that there will be no one available to care for their family members that experience disabilities or that are aging and living in the community; and

Whereas this workforce shortage is the most significant barrier to implementing the Olmstead decision, undermining the expansion of community integration as called for by President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative and placing the community support infrastructure at risk; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Seventy-third Legislative Assembly, recognize that building and maintaining a stable, well-trained, high-quality direct support professional workforce to provide support and services to individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities and the aging community is important in advancing Oregon's commitment to community integration and personal security for these individuals and their families.

Adopted by House May 20, 2005

Chief Clerk of House

Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate June 30, 2005

President of Senate