



**To:** Chair Williams and members of the committee  
**From:** Carolyn Kendrick, Direct Support Professional, Partnerships in Community Living  
**Date:** February 15, 2021  
**Subject:** HB 2964

My name is Carolyn Kendrick. I am a Direct Support Professional (DSP). I have been working in the support field for over 9 years. I am currently working for Partnerships in Community Living. We support people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities at home and at work.

Being a DSP I have learned that everyone has different challenges in their lives and that we are all not the same. When I first started in this field I had no clue as to what life was going to bring to me. It was very scary at first, but I knew that deep in my heart that this was the perfect job for me. Because I love to help make a difference in other people's lives.

Being a DSP and supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities has been a life-changing experience for me. We as DSPs support people with their daily activities, challenging situations, and very personal care. Also, we help manage people's medical needs. We are very dedicated to each and every person, although the wages that we get are not what we as DSPs should be making. We do some of the same kind of work that a certified or registered nurse does. We place our lives on the front line all the time and sometimes seven days a week working 15 plus hours a day and at night. We also put in countless hours being away from our own loved ones. We do this because, we made a commitment to the people we support that we will be reasonable, flexible, respectful, and compassionate.

The people we support depend on us each and every day no matter what. Those we support look forward to seeing us because we are not just the support staff, but we have very important, close, personal relationships too. That is why it is so very important that we as DSPs get the wages that we deserve. We are not paid enough, because when you take a really close look at the work we do and how much time we put into our jobs, it's because we care. Most of us travel an hour to get to work. How can we be there for the people we support if we can't pay for our gas, rent, and feeding our family?

When you take a look at the overall picture, we are not gaining people to work in this field. We are losing people each and every day. The wages are just not enough to keep people in this field. We have the worst turnover. That could change if only y'all, as the Oregon State

Legislature make a difference by supporting HB2964. We are all diverse workers of all colors and backgrounds, but we all share the same love for the people we support. Thank you for your time.