

Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Steiner Hayward, and Co-Chair Rayfield,

My name is Myles Maxey and while I am an Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities professional, I am first and foremost a father. I am writing today as a father of an adolescent who experiences intellectual and developmental disabilities and ask for your support of increased investment in the I/DD budget.

I ask that you invest in services across the board for individuals experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, direct services (e.g., in-home, foster, 24-hour residential, employment, professional behavior services), case management, and ancillary services (e.g., specialized medical supplies, family training, home and vehicle modifications).

As a father to all four of my children, I advocate for them to have the greatest opportunities available to them. I encourage them to reach their dreams, exceed expectations, and break down any barriers put in their way. Since moving to Oregon, the opportunities for my oldest child (who we adopted three years ago) to break down barriers have been greatly enhanced through the supports that he receives through intellectual and developmental disabilities services. We were told that he would never progress past the age of two intellectually and developmentally.

The Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) that have worked in conjunction with my wife and I to support him in developing greater independence and life skill have been completely invaluable. We have seen him flourish into a very dynamic young man. We are seeing him accomplish things now that he has never done so before and he has far exceeded the expectation of two years of age developmentally and intellectually. Direct Support Professionals have shown up and being a huge blessing, not only to my son and family, but to thousands of others across the State of Oregon, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have brought a sense of normalcy in the midst of uncertainty. As such, I ask you to fully invest in the backing of direct support staff across all service settings, including the support and funding of HB2964.

Beyond the extraordinary support of his DSPs, the additional advocacy from his case manager has been vital. My son's case manager has taken a true interest in him and his growth. She regularly check-ins, not only because it is a requirement, but more importantly because she wants the best for him. The support during the pandemic, providing critical information and resources regarding vaccinations, public health protocols and guidance, and opportunities to support in avoiding isolation and segregation during stay at home orders and recommendations. I truly cannot say enough about the value of our case manager. However, I fear that without appropriate funding for case managers, the ability to be effective and develop relationships of trust will be greatly diminished. Caseload sizes will continue to increase to unmanageable level, which will lead to burnout and subsequent turnover, decreased person-centered and focused practices, and diminished relationships. Ultimately, putting those experiencing I/DD at greater risk for adverse outcomes. As such, I ask you to fully invest and fund the I/DD case management budget, which includes supporting HB3116.

As we begin our road to recovery from the pandemic, it is critical that we bolster and protect individuals experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Oregon has long been looked to as a model state for intellectual and developmental disabilities services, which we can continue to do when essential services are funded appropriately. I strongly urge you to fully fund the I/DD direct services budget, especially direct support professionals and case management staff.

Let us as a state continue to be leaders in respecting diversity, creating more inclusive communities, and truly create a space where all people feel that they belong. Thank you for your time and consideration.

In Collaboration,

- *Myles Maxey*

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