

Submitter: Sara Schultz
On Behalf Of: Keith Schultz-Davis
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure: SB646

I'm writing in support of SB646.

As a single working parent of a child with autism, anxiety and adhd, I'm keenly aware of the cost to families to have a child who requires so much extra assistance, extra time & thought, and very capable caregivers. We were given direct support worker hours for my son, but sat on a waiting list for over a year only to get a person who had no experience with children, other than lifeguarding. It was not safe to leave my child in her care. I had to be present, on alert to make sure that I could supervise the two of them. So after six weeks, I finally said she needed to go. So we are back on the list.

There is a shortage of care workers, across-the-board, so finding somebody who is capable and available to work with our children is very difficult.

The other issue is that as a parent of a child with significant needs, I am unable to work full-time. Even if I found a care provider, the service hours cannot be used to cover when I'm going to work anyway. So the whole matter is very complicated.

The right thing to do is to allow parents to be paid caregivers for these children. It places the most qualified person (a parent) to take care of the child, and it will help families make ends meet when they're already in an extremely difficult situation. Plenty of people with kids like mine are in financial straights due to one of the parents having had to quit their job to stay home and take care of this child or homeschool the child. When it's a single parent situation, it's even harder.

If we have care hours for our children and could serve as a paid caregiver, this would immensely improve the situation for my family and many others. It's the right thing to do for the children. With the lack of work force to fill the role of care providers, parents have to do it all. The right thing to do is to allow them to be paid caregivers.