

To Whom it may concern:

I am Erika Brooks, Administrative Assistant for RISE Services Inc., a non-profit organization that provides support and services for individuals with I/DD.

I am writing in support of HB 2457. It ensures DSPs get the wages they deserve by moving DSP wages to 150% of minimum wage and covering the Paid Leave Oregon Payroll Expense.

DSP wages have recently increased after you agreed to fund the current rate model last session. This small increase has impacted our DSPs greatly and has positively impacted our organization as well. We would not have survived without it and need to make sure it's protected and enhanced going forward.

Currently, the pandemic and other relevant workforce changes have continued to impact our services and our DSPs. We still struggle to hire and retain employees due to the wage changes and workforce we are in. The work that is done by DSPs isn't an easy one and deserves to have a wage that reflects those challenges.

Current reimbursements for these services were built on cost studies that are now years old, so even though service rate models are fully funded, the costs built into these models are significantly behind the current market. I have attached a flier that highlights these key points and shows how DSP wages consistently trend above the reimbursement rate.

As someone who on a daily basis is interviewing or onboarding new staff I see first hand the turnover rate that occurs and know that it is largely impacted by the current wage. Being a DSP isn't something that everyone out there has the heart, patience or understanding for. Our DSPs deserve to feel like their work is valued and should see that reflected in their wages.

Please vote yes on HB 2457. DSPs, the people they support and their families are counting on your support!