

Submitter: Emily Bronec

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB646

I am writing my support of SB 646 which allows parents or legal guardians to be paid as direct support professionals for their children with disabilities. As a pediatrician who cares for disabled children as well as a mother to an autistic child, I professionally and personally see the imperative role a parent plays in their child's life. Parents are an active and invaluable member of the medical decision making team in medicine, and they should also be considered such as support professionals for their children. Not only is it seemingly impossible to find and hire DSPs, but children are further harmed by having inconsistent caregivers who often lack the personal investment of a parent. Many parents struggle to find reliable childcare and support for their disabled children in order for the parent to work, which leaves them unable to work while caring for their child. This places significant stressors on a family, which ultimately contribute to further adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Having the option of a paid parental caregiver allows the individual who knows the child best to be able to provide the necessary supports for the child in a sustainable fashion. From my personal and professional experience, it is in the child's best interest to have the option for parents to be a paid caregiver.

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