



Memo to: Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
From: Margaret Theisen, Executive Director
Pearl Buck Center, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization
Date: February 7, 2023
Re: Support for HB 2457

In recent years the mandatory rise in minimum wage has compressed our capacity to compete with low wage earners in our community. This unintended consequence has caused a further drain on the support system for vulnerable members of our community who have intellectual or developmental disabilities. As the Executive Director of Pearl Buck Center with 85 employees and more than 300 people we support, I have felt and seen the pain of this. When fast food restaurants pay higher wages than our current state reimbursement rate allows, this is untenable and unjust.

I am writing to urge you to rectify this situation by moving Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) wages to 150% of minimum wage and cover the Paid Leave Oregon Payroll Expense. While recognizing the need to mandate minimum wage increases, our State must also be responsive to the reimbursement rates for those in our community who provide services to marginalized communities. Please vote yes on HB 2457 as our DSPs, the people they support, and their families are counting on you.