

Submitter: Maureen Niland Stokes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

On behalf of our Staff and the individuals with severe disabilities they serve, I am asking you to support HB 2457. This bill will allow us to provide wage increases to our staff who provide direct support services to people with disabilities. In 2021 because of legislative support we received we were able to increase our wages to the direct support professionals. However, we are still not able to compete with area businesses and county and state agencies for employees. This has impacted our ability to recruit staff to develop employment opportunities for people with disabilities and provide the services they need to live in the community. Unlike other businesses we are totally dependant on the state to set the reimbursement rate for the services we provide. Unlike many other businesses we are not able to pass on increases in business operations, i.e. health insurance, costs to the individuals who receive the service. This leaves us unable to increase wages for our Direct Care Professionals, many who worked tirelessly through the pandemic keeping Oregon's most vulnerable citizens safe and healthy.

I know how busy you are and how many competing requests come your way for consideration, however, I implore you to support HB 2457.

Many thanks,

Maureen Stokes, CEO Witco, Inc.