

# ALBERTINA KERR

February 7, 2023

To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Albertina Kerr is one of the oldest and largest nonprofits in the Pacific Northwest. We provide services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health challenges in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Marion Counties. I am writing in support of HB 2457, which would tie Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages to the Oregon minimum wage and ensure that these critical workers always make 150% of the minimum wage, as well as coverage of the Paid Leave Oregon payroll expense.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities deserve quality care and support from the DSPs that support them. And our DSPs deserve to earn a living wage that adequately reflects their essential work.

We acknowledge and thank the legislature for funding a new rate model last session that provided a wage increase for DSPs. However, the funded rate model was developed several years ago and prior to the pandemic. As a result, the wage reimbursements we receive from the state are far below what we pay our DSP staff.

- The average hourly reimbursement wage is 17.81/hour from the state
- The starting hourly wage for Albertina Kerr DSPs is \$18.00/hour
- The average hourly wage for Albertina Kerr DSPs is \$19.56/hour
- The Living Wage\* hourly wage for Multnomah County is \$21.85/hour for a single individual

Despite finding the resources to go above what the state reimburses us our vacancy rate is a staggering 18%. The staffing challenges Albertina Kerr is experiencing are unprecedented. Our ability to recruit and retain DSPs is challenging when they can earn more working in almost any other sector.

Please vote yes on HB 2457. We at Albertina Kerr are counting on you!

Sincerely,



Allison Stark  
Chief Executive Officer, Albertina Kerr

\*<https://livingwage.mit.edu/pages/about>