

Submitter: Haile McIntosh

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB646

My name is Haile McIntosh, I live in Portland, OR, and I have been a DSP to two different children with cerebral palsy for over six and a half years. I am testifying in support of SB646.

I have witnessed time after time, the struggle it is for their parents to find other DSPs for their children. I have participated in interviews and training of new caregivers myself, and see how much time and energy it takes up, often coming out of it without an increase in good care support for these kids. What I have witnessed has brought me to the understanding that more often than not, the care needed is not available and takes an immense amount of time, energy and practice to teach and learn. The parents of these children have been learning how to best support their children from before they were born and witness them and their needs with an intimacy and frequency that equips them with the skills to provide the most fulfilling care for their children. Paid or not, many of these parents would remain the most reliable, consistent, and best equipped care providers to their children. When parents can earn a wage for this role that they inevitably fill, rather than being denied a wage altogether, I see the positive impact it has on the children getting care. As I have seen it, when these kids can be seen and cared for in the way that the intimate knowledge of a parent can provide, and the parent can have access to a wage through this, these children have greater access to life enrichment, support in navigating the world, building meaningful connections, and growing their autonomy. I feel, without a doubt in my heart, that ensuring the option of parents to be paid caregivers to their children with disabilities is necessary to any goal at making sure these children have their needs fulfilled.