

Submitter: Linda Detweiler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

We must continue to work to move the Direct Support Professional DSP workforce out of crisis. The 2021 Legislature made a historic investment in services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and for the first time the I/DD system was FULLY FUNDED. Even though this investment allowed us to increase wages for DSPs by \$1.25 an hour (current average reimbursement wage for DSPs at \$17.81), providers still report an average DSP vacancy rate of 23%. Additional increases in wages are needed to address the current workforce shortage. Per a recent ORA survey, 85% of providers are no longer accepting referrals to serve new people and 86% have reduced capacity or closed services and anticipate closing additional services.

ABOUT DSPs: Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide crucial supports to adults and children experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their work includes managing medical needs, challenging behaviors, personal hygiene, and support to maintain employment and make real connections in the community. These incredibly dedicated individuals are not state employees, rather they work for small and medium non-profits and entities that provide community based services across Oregon. While not state employees, their wages (via I/DD rates) are funded almost entirely by state and federally matched funds.

A workforce that is consistent and stable is needed in order to meet the needs of the clients served. Increasing the wage to a more livable wage will help to fill the present staffing shortage as well as retain the workers presently in this field.

Please support HB 2457