

Submitter: Christina Thomas On Behalf Of: Committee: Measure: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services HB2457 My name is Christina Thomas and I work for Partnerships in Community Living. I have had many roles in my time at PCL, starting as a Direct Support Professional in 20001. I am writing today in support of HB2457. This bill is much needed for this field because it will raise DSP wages to 150% of minimum wage and cover Paid Leave Oregon Payroll expenses. I'd like to express my gratitude for the raise that we did get last session. It was only due to this that we were able to keep functioning during the covid19 pandemic. The pandemic and changing workforce continues to be challenging. Turnover is extremely high for this essential position. During my time as a DSP, I've been in situations where I've sat with people as they have peacefully passed away, I have been with people who had mental breaks and have harmed themselves; I have done very intimate care anything I would do for myself I have done for them and I have been an advocate for their health and medical to professionals. This work should definitely be above minimum wage and requires dedication, care, and respect, understanding and compassion. This is vital work and the pandemic has only further illustrated why it is so essential. A person who is working at a fast food restaurant often makes more hourly than the average DSP. DSPs are tenacious, caring people who deserve to be able to support themselves and their families. Please support HB2457. DSPs, their families, and Oregonians living with disabilities deserve this much needed bill! Value the work, raise the wage, and thank you for your time.