Hello my name is Kevin Graybeal ,

I manage a residential group home called Hope House here in Salem that serves three adults who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The gentlemen I care for have called Hope House "home" for the entire eight years that I have been part of the non-profit organization Rise. I currently supervise a team of eleven direct support professionals and can attest first hand to the staffing crisis and worker shortages that those in our field have been facing; especially through the pandemic.

 I frequently work 6-7 days a week often filling in DSP shifts to help improve the lives of the individuals we serve. Just this last weekend, I covered for a DSP who was at his father's side in the ICU, making sure the gentlemen at Hope House could attend a Valentine themed Happy Dance party put on by volunteers at Houck Middle School. The long work weeks and extra efforts are worth it though, when you see the smiles and authentic expressions of humanity that these wonderful, unique, individuals bring forth.

I'm here today in support of House Bill 2457. I believe that the I/DD residential group home model, and paying DSPs a living wage, overlaps with top initiatives in this State like behavioral health, housing, and healthcare. For many people a managed residential "home" setting is the humanitarian approach and alternative to life in a hotel, on the streets, or in an institution

In order to run programs like mine, we need DSPs, and skilled people to train them with. Many of the dsp's I supervise are working to pay their way through school, and I've seen several dsp's moving back in with their parents, living out of their car, or off their friend's couch, struggling to pay the rising costs of living.

Please consider supporting House Bill 2457 and invest in growing the workforce we need to tackle the challenges facing Oregonians today. Together we can show that our state is prepared and capable of not only overcoming these issues, but being a leading example.

Thank you for listening