

Submitter: Katie Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

My name is Katie Smith. I have not only been working to support folks with I/DD in Central Oregon for the last 3 years, but I have autistic children as well. Please support HB 2457! Direct Support Professionals deserve a living wage that can allow us to support our families while we provide this service to our Oregon Community. Many of our staff at Opportunity Foundation are single parents and they should be able to support their families on the wages from a full time job! Last session you voted to fund the current wage model which was a great and necessary step without which we wouldn't have survived. Please protect and enhance this investment so that we can keep supporting the individuals we support. Covid has hit our homes hard and we have been unable to secure enough staffing even with previous wage increases. Our work keeps people alive and adds a positive influence to our communities as whole, and oftentimes it is still paid less than positions in fast food or retail. Times have changes. Wages have changed across the spectrum of employment. Housing costs and other costs of living have skyrocketed, particularly in Central Oregon. PLEASE VOTE YES!