

Submitter: Shawna Hickman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

My name is Shawna Hickman. I have been working to support folks with I/DD in Central Oregon for the past 5 1/2 years, in many different aspects of their lives. 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. However, Covid-19 has hit our homes hard and we have been unable to secure enough staffing even with previous wage increases and hiring bonuses. Additionally, Housing costs and other costs of living have skyrocketed, particularly in Central Oregon. The work we do helps keep people alive and adds a positive influence to our communities as a whole. Oftentimes, it is still paid less than positions in food service or retail. Times have changed, and wages have changed across the spectrum of employment. Please protect and enhance this investment in Oregon's future, so that we are able to keep supporting our individuals to live their best and fullest lives possible. Thank You! PLEASE VOTE YES!!