

Submitter: Mackenzie Whaling

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

My name is Mackenzie Whaling. I have not only been working to support folks with I/DD in Central Oregon for the last 5.5 years, but I have children with special needs and my husband as a disability 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 or families surviving on one income 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 has hit our homes hard and we have been unable to secure enough staffing even with previous wage increases. Additionally, Housing costs and other costs of living have skyrocketed, particularly in Central Oregon. The work we do 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 changed. Wages have changed across the spectrum of employment. Please protect and enhance this investment Oregon's future, so that we can keep supporting the individuals we support to live their best and fullest lives. PLEASE VOTE YES!