

Submitter: Linda Cox  
On Behalf Of: Pearl Buck Center  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Measure: HB2457

I support this bill and fear what will happen to people with Intellectual and Developmental disabilities if something does not happen to increase funding for DSP's. I have worked in this field for almost 18 years, started working in a sheltered workshop for a non-profit and yes, low wages have always been the main reason for the high turnover rate. For the last nine years I have worked in supported employment and most of those in management. Before the pandemic we supported over 100 people in their Community jobs, had two thriving Project SEARCH sites. Our employment Department had about 47 staff members. Since the pandemic we have struggled to hire staff. We had to put Job Development on hold for a year because we had no job coaches to support new placements. Supported employee have lost their jobs because we were unable to provide them with a job coach. The few job developers we had left, were overworked from job coaching and left. We have been trying to rebuild our program for the last couple years. We cannot hire enough staff to support the current individuals we support, current staff are burned out and leaving. We need to raise wages for direct support workers now or soon agencies will be closing. People needs these supports an it is a demanding job. Staff are leaving for higher paying jobs in other fields.