

Chair Gelser Bloun and members of the committee,

I am Dr. Carol Greenough, I am testifying as a private citizen in support of SB 606. While I serve with a number of groups working to provide human services, I am testifying about the impact this has on my life and those I care about.

My brother John, has Down's Syndrome and has thrived throughout his life. Within the last year he developed a seizure disorder and rapid onset dementia. He currently needs two people to help transfer him at times. While he lives in a wonderful residential program, they are having difficulty recruiting workers. Sometimes the caregivers work multiple shifts in a row in order to make sure that his house is staffed I worry about the future if things don't change.

Over the years as a psychologist and community advocate, I have met many mothers who are heartbroken as they try to find help for their sons who are frequently homeless and experience a psychotic disorder. Now my own son-in-law is in the same situation in Seattle. One of our biggest concerns is that our family members can't establish a relationship with a case manager because of rapid turnover in these jobs.

I frequently eat dinner with my daughter and her wife, both teachers. Dinner table conversation often is about the challenge of working in a classroom today. Many teachers with large classes and multiple children needing intervention must go it alone because there are no education assistants available for hire. This is driving teachers out of the profession and leaving our children without the support they need.

I could continue for many more examples but the main point of this is that we don't have enough people willing to enter careers in the human services. We try to recruit people but, too often, this means moving workers from one program to another. The pool of available workers in human services is too small. There have been several bills introduced in various areas from health care to education to nonprofit programs to address this, but I have seen no attempt to look at the broad problem. By addressing the issue in all nonprofits, SB 606 at least cuts across some of these silos.

My dream is that this bill, or another could be the vehicle to look broadly at all jobs within the human services sector. I usually resist the proposal to do another "study". In this case, I think **we need a broad scale look at how to raise the rewards and prestige of those who care for the people of our state.** I could rant a long time about how we have failed to honor educators, case workers, nurses, residential care workers, etc. As people's relationship to work changes in our society, we must find ways to make sure that the workers in these areas, the glue that holds our society together, are rewarded with both benefits and gratitude.

As you heard from many others talking about the part of this bill addressing running a nonprofit, the bureaucratic challenges are immense.

I started a mental health center in the late 70's and went on to become program administrator for Alaska's 25 mental health centers in an era before the internet. We had to fill out one NCR (non carbon required) form a day to reflect our workload. This produced the report that I used to administer the system. Now the demands for reports are endless and each minute spent in responding is one minute where service is not happening. We can do better. HB 606 gives us a means to look at how we support those doing the most important work in our society.

Thank you for your attention and for your service,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.