

Submitter: Nicholas Tolman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

My name is Nick Tolman, and I have been a Direct Support Professional with Living Opportunities, Inc. for 3.25 years. I came into this profession expecting it to be like every other job I'd had up to that point, and to my surprise I couldn't have been more wrong. Every day I get to touch people's lives and try to make a positive difference. I'm there when they have successes, and I'm there when they have setbacks. I feel anger and sadness on their behalf whenever it seems that the scales are tipped against them. I help the individuals I serve to advocate for themselves, and I step in and advocate for them when needed. Now I am advocating for myself and my fellow DSPs. I have seen firsthand how difficult it is for the people I serve when the staff members they like and trust have to leave, and I have experienced some of the strain of a company being unable to hire or retain quality employees because it is unable to compete financially or keep up with rising costs of living. I have also experienced my own financial difficulties, and have done my best to not allow that strain to show in my work. I am asking that as you all are deliberating on SB 5506 and POP132, you consider all aspects of how your decision could help or harm those most in need in our communities. I thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and I sincerely hope you will support this issue