

Good evening Co Chair Steiner and Sanchez, members of the committee , my name is Kevin Graybeal and this is Reese, one of the individuals I support.

I manage a residential group home called Hope House here in Salem that serves three adults who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The gentlemen I care for have called Hope House “home” for the entire eight years that I have been part of the non-profit organization Rise. I currently supervise a team of eleven direct support professionals and can attest first hand to the staffing crisis and worker shortages that those in our field have been facing; especially through the pandemic.

I started my career in this field as a direct support professional working with Reese. I would come to Hope House on the weekends and take Reese to the Special Olympics practices so that he could play Bocce ball with his friends. Reese would tell me while practicing “eye on the ball, be the ball” and he would always ask me when I would be coming to Hope House next.

Reese had a dream of attending a country music concert and thanks to our program being fully staffed I was able to help make this a reality for him. He and I signed up as volunteers for the Oregon Jamboree Music Festival in Sweethome. I would arrive at Hope House in the morning at 4am to help get Reese ready. We would drive to Sweethome to fulfill our volunteer duties and after our shift ended Reese got to see some of his favorite country music singers perform live. Reese ended up giving a nickname that he still uses to this day, since my middle name is Alan, he would call me “Alan Jackson Garfield Drive”

I’m here today in support of full funding for I/DD services in POP 132 to support DSP wages. In order to help make people like Reese’s dreams come true we need caring, compassionate, invested DSP’s who are willing to go the extra mile. Cost of living has been on the rise and many dsp’s are struggling financially. I’ve seen several DSP’s not being able to afford housing, living with their parents or relatives, and others having to pick up a second job to support their families.

Please consider supporting full funding for POP 132 and help provide DSP’s who care for the most vulnerable among us a liveable wage.

Thank you for listening