

I am Dena Wilder, Direct Support Provider and Manager with Lifesource Group. I live and work in Portland, Oregon and have been a DSP for nine years. I am also a HCW for someone one day a week and I have worked as a PSW in the past. I have concerns and questions about Agency with Choice.

I believe any proposed major changes to the DD system should always first be run by the customers to hear their input. This was never done, to my knowledge, with Agency with Choice. It has been so complicated to understand, which is a major concern I have with it. Why do government services have to always be so complicated? Why are we making it more complex instead of simpler? What...you can hire a PSW, DSP, or DSW...they all do the same thing but are called 3 different things? Why? How do we explain this silliness?

As a former PSW and current HCW, I understand the problems with on-boarding going through the state versus a provider agency. If this new bill could facilitate a change so that providers do not have to wait so long to on-board to work with a client, that would be a much needed change. That could tremendously help our workforce shortage.

I have a concern that this bill would create two major agencies overseeing providers and the small provider agencies that have been building small-knit communities will be lost. As someone who has worked hard in this field and have finally moved into a management role, I worry that my role of serving to support DSP's will be eliminated. I enjoy supporting DSP's to do quality work. I hope that this new bill will have management positions within it to give providers the support they need, support that PSWs and HCWs do not get.

As a HCW, I have enjoyed the fantastic health benefits I receive from SEIU. Recently, the agency I work for as a DSP began offering health care, so I had to switch to what they are offering. It is not as good as SEIU's benefits and this has been a tough pill to swallow. Is there a way this bill could help us all have the wonderful health benefits that SEIU offers?

Can this bill help fix the problems agencies are having regarding group rates? The rates for 2:1 and 3:1 are making it difficult for agencies to sustain themselves with the rate structures specifically for these two ratios. These are the ratios that help customers build friendships and social networks. Why are they being discouraged by these poor rates?

I would love to support a bill that gives providers the following:

1. One name—not 3!
2. Good health benefits
3. Livable family wage
4. Support through skilled management
5. Well done training

If Agency with Choice can do these things, then I would support it.

There has not been enough transparency or explanation at this point for me to support this bill.