

House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

Date: 3/4/25

Written Testimony in support of House Bill 3168

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Hi, my name is Jammie, and I've been a Direct Support Professional (DSP) in Springfield, Oregon, for nine years now. I started this work when I was 21, and over the years, I've seen a lot of people come and go. This job isn't for everyone—it's tough. As a DSP, you're a cook, a nurse, a cleaner, a driver, and an aide all rolled into one. But sometimes, you also have to be the "bad guy," and that's hard. It hurts to tell someone that you're trying to help, "Hey, we can't go out right now because we don't have enough staff." If it were you or me, we could choose when to go out, but the people we support don't always have that option unless they go out alone—and that can often cause other problems and be unsafe for them. On top of that, we're there to help them regulate their emotions, but without enough staff, I'm often the one who gets yelled at, has things thrown at me, or even gets hit.

In a perfect world, I'd be able to take everyone out every day so they can do what they love and have a happy, fulfilling day. But that's not always possible. I've been left alone too many times, and it's scary. One time, one of the individuals I support got really upset. Instead of being able to focus on making sure they were safe, I had to run back and forth between them and the others I support—making sure no one was throwing things, yelling, or trying to run downstairs to start a fight. I was stretched too thin, and I could have missed something important. Another time, I was supposed to take someone on a drive. This person required two staff, but I was alone. It got bad—really bad. The individual ran across the street, swung at people, ripped out small trees, and could have hurt themselves or someone else. A co-staff ended up getting hurt trying to help. Situations like this are why I support House Bill 3168.

House Bill 3168 is about making sure we have the staffing we need to keep everyone safe—the individuals we support and other DSPs like me. It's about holding agencies accountable so we're not left alone in situations that could turn dangerous and making

sure there's a written safety plan in place. This work is hard enough as it is, but with the right staffing and increased support from the agency, we can make sure the people we support have the best possible care and that we can do our jobs without putting ourselves or others at risk.

I urge members of the committee to join me and my coworkers in supporting this important bill. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jammie

Direct Support Professional

Springfield, Oregon