

Submitter: MM Megan Maculsay
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Megan Maculsay, I am an HR Coordinator at Albertina Kerr Centers, and my primary role is working to hire quality Direct Support Professional staff to work in our group homes supporting youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I myself have a personal background in direct support for family members undergoing intensive medical care, and a professional background in direct support for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I know first-hand not only how important this work is to our communities and families, but also how much dedication, drive, and passion for supporting individuals in the I/DD community that those in Direct Support roles put in every single day. Each day at my job now, I speak with people who are eager to either start in this field or continue gaining skills and experience in this field, which is phenomenal to see. There are so many people in not just the Portland Metro area, but throughout Oregon who want to make a difference in people's lives, and work to be active members of their communities. Direct Support Professionals who support individuals with disabilities are a too often overlooked, yet invaluable and essential group in our communities.

In 2023, the Legislature directed DHS to prepare a Rate & Wage Study further evaluating home and community-based service delivery systems. The study reviewed wages and payment rates for Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) providers who work in people's homes, group homes, foster homes and residential care facilities. The report, released in January of 2025, is the first time a figure can be attached to answer what is needed to stabilize this workforce and ensure the system doesn't fall further behind. A cost of approximately \$558,000,000.00.

Those who are seeking jobs in this line of work, and those currently in this field deserve to be compensated appropriately that is in line with cost-of-living rates and when those rates increase. They deserve a minimum wage of \$25.00 per hour. I also ask that the state provide longevity pay to reward Direct Support Professionals and Managers who have stayed in this field. It is has gone on far too long, that organizations that provide Direct Support to vulnerable populations are underfunded. What that shows to Direct Support Professional staff is that they are undervalued by the state. The result of continued underfunding will lead to more people leaving this line of work, and more individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are left without quality trained staff to support them in living self-determined lives each and every day. I truly wish to never get to that point.

I will close with an experience I had years ago while supporting someone with a developmental disability. I was a Behavior Technician supporting a youth who was

such an incredibly bright person, who could light up any room they walked in. This youth required 24/7 care (and I'll be honest, it was hard work a lot of the time) and other than their team providing behavioral health support (that I was a part of), they were in the care of their grandparents, who were beginning to have trouble keeping up themselves. They relied strongly on the support of the staff that worked with their grandchild every day. It wasn't something that I liked thinking of, but I couldn't help but wonder what the future would look like for all of them 5, 10, 20 years down the line, and hoped every day that whoever gets to work with and support this clever, enthusiastic, and intuitive individual, is someone who can give them the quality commitment it takes to ensure they have a voice and a place in their community. Anyone who worked with them also deserves a voice and place in their community. Thank you.