

Submitter: David Hopkinson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

I am writing to urge you to support an increase in wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). As essential caregivers, DSPs provide critical services to individuals with disabilities, ensuring their well-being, independence, and dignity. However, despite the demanding nature of their work, DSPs are consistently underpaid, leading to financial strain, burnout, and significant personal sacrifices that take a toll on their family lives.

The responsibilities of a DSP go far beyond basic caregiving. They provide emotional support, medical assistance, transportation, and life skills training. They work long hours—often including nights, weekends, and holidays—due to chronic staffing shortages. These exhausting conditions leave many DSPs struggling to maintain a healthy work-life balance, often forcing them to choose between providing for their own families and continuing in a profession they love.

Low wages push many DSPs to take on multiple jobs just to make ends meet, limiting their time with their own children and spouses. The emotional and physical exhaustion from working extended shifts and overtime means they return home drained, unable to be fully present for their loved ones. Some are forced to rely on public assistance despite working full-time, highlighting the injustice of a system that undervalues their essential contributions.

The high turnover rate among DSPs due to low wages creates instability, not only for workers and their families but also for the individuals they support. When DSPs leave for better-paying jobs, the continuity of care is disrupted, affecting the quality of life for people with disabilities who depend on them. Raising wages would improve retention, provide financial security for DSPs and their families, and ultimately enhance the quality of care for those they serve.

Investing in DSPs is an investment in stronger families, a more stable workforce, and a more compassionate society. I urge you to advocate for increased wages and funding for these essential workers. Their dedication should be met with fair compensation that allows them to support both the individuals they care for and their own families.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response and to seeing positive change for DSPs in our community.

Sincerely,

David Hopkinson