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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2150

I have worked with individuals with Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities for 14 years now and have seen many changes in those 14 years. I have seen good and bad changes, and significant obstacles to the care of these amazing people. Cutting or even just underfunding the services does them an injustice and takes people back to seclusion, lack of proper behavioral supports, limited community access, and even an impact on residential care. It is hard to get staff to work in the homes because they can work in fast food for the same pay rate and inflation / cost of living is hitting everyone hard. People are not able to support their families with the wages offered and working in something like fast food is often more appealing than doing hygiene routines for the same pay rate. The negative effects are seen throughout the system in group homes, foster homes, and even family homes. If people do not have the funding they truly need, the health and safety can be compromised resulting in abuse or neglect as defined in the OAR's. My question is wouldn't this make the state guilty of abuse / neglect as well? One would think if they were not willing to fund the programs appropriately.

Families are in need of the extra support and cannot get respite care or personal workers because they cannot afford to pay them, putting everything on the family. A family member is needed to stay home with the person 24 / 7, and this is not feasible nor is it feasible for someone to stay home and not work like normal to care for their loved one without the funding to supplement income that is lost. The state law makers continue to try decreasing the funding, but they are not thinking of some of the most vulnerable citizens they are elected to protect. The health and safety of the people receiving services as well as those providing services is dependent on the appropriate funding.

We need to have the proper funding to ensure people receive the best care possible. Some people are able to hold jobs but need to have someone with them constantly for redirection / assistance and others volunteer with significant supports, but all of this helps to make productive members of society and inclusion. Without funding, the supports need to encourage inclusion, and productivity is not feasible regardless of the living arrangements the person has.

I would invite any lawmaker to spend a week working in the group homes, foster homes, or even the family homes and tell us the funding is not needed or there. It seems funding can be found for programs of much less significance or importance than ours. Why is that? I implore you to take time to visit with the people you are

cutting funding for and see how important the need is for the support.