

Submitter: Kelly Thran

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2150

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the committee:

My name is Kelly Thran, and I have the privilege of serving as CEO at Community Services, Incorporated (CSI). CSI is a nonprofit organization supporting nearly 80 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We employ about 180 Direct Support Professionals (DSP) who support people 24-hours per day, seven days a week.

CSI relies solely on reimbursement from the State to carry out our work. Increased costs across the board have created a situation where we are having to rely on our small reserves to financially stay afloat. Nearly 75% of our annual budget is paid out in wages and benefits for employees—we are currently paying an average of \$23.65 per hour for DSPs while getting reimbursed \$18.38 in the current rate model. This model is not sustainable for us.

I am writing to ask that you support HB 2150 with the -2 Amendment. This amended bill would direct the Department of Human Services (DHS) to include an annual cost of living adjustment into contracts with community provider organizations for the provision of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. An annual cost of living adjustment will allow CSI to increase wages for our critical, and deserving, workforce.

DHS recently completed a study at the legislature's request that demonstrated chronic underfunding of these services has created a \$558 million gap between what providers are currently being paid and actual costs. This bill would keep that gap from growing larger by ensuring that annual increases of no less than the Consumer Price Index are included in DHS contracts for these services.

This bill helps Direct Support Professionals wages keep up with inflation at a minimum, preventing this vital workforce from falling further behind.

Please support HB 2150 with the -2 Amendment and prioritize funding for IDD services in the 2025-2027 Budget.

Respectfully,  
Kelly Thran  
President and CEO

Community Services, Inc.