

Submitter: Kathy Dancer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2150

My name is Kathy Dancer. My brother has resided in a group home for the majority of his life, exceeding 40 years. My sister and I took over guardianship when my parents both had passed away, quickly getting involved and came to know how important the staff and Direct Support Professional's (DSPs) are to my brother's everyday life and wellbeing.

What I didn't realize is just how much work and training the DSP's go through to keep up to date in their jobs. But also, the responsibility they have taking care of their clients, and in my brother's case, this includes bathing, dressing, feeding and making sure medications are given at the right time.

I have also seen how hard the job is for the pay DSPs receive. It is completely underrated for the work they do each day. I have seen the revolving door of staffing due to the lack of pay for how much work they do. Which then gets passed down to the clients who are so dependent on them, having another new DSP who much learn all the routines and trainings for each person, not to mention the trust that must be rebuilt.

When I saw the opportunity, that DSPs may get paid fairly. I knew I must share our story. My brother has been in a bad group home in the past due to low wages and not being able to fill the positions needed. So, they lowered their standard and my brother paid the price. It is time DSPs get paid fair wages for the hard work they put in, caring for those who need them and couldn't live without them. Higher wages equate to better DSPs and less turnover, being paid what they deserve and creating a better living environment all around.