

**Good afternoon, Co-chairs Campos and Valderrama, and rest of the committee,**

My name is Heather Clark, and I am a parent of a child with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). I am here to ask for \$558 million to properly fund IDD services. This amount is based on a study that shows the true funding gap.

This funding is crucial because without it, providers can't keep up with rising costs. This leads to high turnover, service disruptions, and less access for people with IDD. Many providers are operating at a deficit and relying on reserves that are quickly running out.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) do essential and demanding work but are paid too little. The current rate models don't reflect competitive wages, making it hard to recruit and retain staff. We need a system that supports a livable wage for DSPs.

**Investing in DSP wages improves service quality and stability for those who rely on these supports. When DSPs leave due to low wages, it disrupts the lives of individuals with disabilities who have to adjust to new caregivers.**

**As a parent, I have seen firsthand the impact of these disruptions. My child has had to cope with the loss of familiar faces and the anxiety of adjusting to new caregivers. Each time a DSP leaves, it feels like starting over, and it takes a toll on my child's emotional well-being.**

IDD providers can't raise rates or wages on their own; they depend on state funding. Without increased funding, service access will shrink, and more providers will be forced to close or reduce services.

**We need legislative action in the 2025-27 budget to address this crisis. Immediate investment is needed to stabilize services and prevent further workforce shortages and service disruptions.**

**Please champion increased IDD funding in the 2025-27 DHS budget and help fill the \$558 million gap. By doing so, you will be supporting families like mine and ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the care and stability they deserve.**

Thank you for your time.