

Submitter: Deirdre Swanson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

\$558 million is needed to properly fund IDD services—the first time we have a concrete amount showing the true funding gap

Thanks to DHS Wage & Rate study conducted at the legislature's request

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) deserve fair wages. DSPs perform essential, demanding, skilled work but are paid far below sustainable levels.

Share specific stories about the incredible work you perform

Give legislators a picture of the people you support and the challenges you face.

The current rate models underestimate actual competitive wages, leaving providers unable to recruit and retain staff.

Talk about specific competitors in our area (fast food, retail, etc.)

Investing in DSP wages improves service quality and stability for individuals who rely on these supports.

Share stories about how people are impacted when they have lost DSPs or have to adjust to new people due to staff shortages

Talk about challenges with hiring and turnover

DSPs can talk about the difficulty of living with low wages i.e. love the work but may have to look alternatives to support my family, etc.