

Submitter: Brenden Burdge

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to highlight the urgent need for increased funding for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) services. According to the recent DHS Wage & Rate study conducted at the legislature's request, we now have a concrete figure showing the true funding gap: **\$558 million**. This substantial amount reflects years of chronic underfunding and underscores the critical need for investment in this essential workforce.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play a vital role in our community, providing care and support to individuals who might otherwise be homeless or institutionalized, which would incur even greater costs. DSPs do not choose this career for financial gain; they are driven by compassion and a commitment to helping those in desperate need of care.

I urge you to take action to increase funding for the IDD community and move us toward closing this significant gap. Supporting higher wages for DSPs is not just an investment in these dedicated professionals, but in the well-being and dignity of the individuals they serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brenden Burdge