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On Behalf Of: Pearl Buck Center
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

During my career as a Job Coach I have had the privilege of witnessing many individuals overcome barriers at their employment, attain mastery of their job and advocate for promotions at their work. Several family members of the people I support have said they've seen a huge increase in their confidence not only with their job, but with other aspects of their lives. They've noticed that they're happier at home and are excited to go to work. Not only does this give them financial independence but they learn skills that set them up for future success.

Positive rapport is one of the most powerful tools we have as DSPs in developing the trust needed to support them on their journey, and a way to gain this trust is through time and consistency. However, this becomes much more difficult as inflation continues to increase and DSPs can't afford to live in the area they work. This forces us to leave the job and the people we support just so we can pay rent. In addition, there is a huge financial cost that comes from having to train new employees constantly, and a massive loss to the knowledge and experience they bring to our programs. To reduce this constant change, we need to increase the wages of all DSP so they feel valued and can afford to stay with the people they support.

In addition, there was a wage and rate study done recently that showed a \$558 million deficit in funding to our programs, which shows how dire the situation is. This bill however, alleviate this funding deficit and gives the needed support to our programs. Because of this I urge you, please support SB 5526; invest in us and we will help you build a better community.