

Submitter: Cassidy Gabbard

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Co-chairs Campos and Valderrama, and rest of the committee,

My name is Cassidy Gabbard, and I have had the amazing pleasure of working in the I/DD field for 11 years, starting when I was just 19 years old.

Becoming a DSP in my teenage years has changed the course of my life. What I thought was going to be a steppingstone on my way to a “real career”, turned out to be me discovering my Purpose. However, the reality is that I am lucky to have been able to sustain my life on this wage, as many others have had to abandon their passion and purpose and leave this field due to inadequate wages. It’s a heartbreaking fact because being a DSP is a crucial, delicate, meaningful job that society cannot live without. Through holidays, snowstorms, power outages, World Wide Pandemics, 24/7, we rely on DSPs show up for the humans who require our support.

\$558 million is needed to properly fund IDD services—This number is very high, but it reflects chronic underfunding and the urgent need for investment in this workforce. Please prioritize funding for I/DD services.