

Submitter: Melissa Littlefield  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Co-Chairs and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to ask for an investment into the Oregon workforce. I'm writing to you today to advocate for increased wages for Direct Support Professionals—because these essential workers deserve the same quality of life and the same amount of dignity that they work so hard to provide to others.

DSPs partner with doctors, therapists, behavior specialists, and families. They implement medical and behavior support plans, assist with daily living, communicate in individualized ways, and offer choice counseling that upholds dignity and autonomy. Their titles indicate they are professionals and the scope of the work they do goes beyond anything that I have witnessed in my career, and they deserve to be compensated for the impact they have in the world.

They show up day after day—often working multiple jobs, sacrificing time with their own families, and putting their own mental and physical well-being on the line—to ensure others have the support they need. They are builders of equity, inclusion, and stability in our communities.

Recently, I was able to witness the profound impact they have when one of the people who choose to receive services from our team was passing. The team worked around the clock providing medical care, offering comfort not only to the individual, but to his family. Volunteering to stay multiple days in a row, so that he was never alone in his time of need. It was nothing short of a miracle to witness.

And yet, far too many are forced to leave this deeply fulfilling work simply because they cannot afford to stay. This is more than a workforce issue—it's a loss of connection, and a disservice to our collective community.

Oregonians with disabilities deserve consistent, quality care. And that starts with valuing—and paying—DSPs fairly.

Please support legislation that increases DSP wages. It's the right thing to do, and the time is now.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Littlefield

Advocate and HR Manager