



# Cornerstone Associates

*In business to make a difference*

TO: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
FROM: Kenneth Smith, Executive Director, Cornerstone Associates  
RE: HB 5006 TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Dear Joint Committee and all legislators,

On behalf of Cornerstone Associates and all ODDS Certified Providers hiring DSPs and other positions required for the daily operation of care and support for individuals with I/DD, this is my ask:

Please include funds in the budget that will provide a significant increase to our fee for service rates. The new rate and wage study is proof of the need.

As a provider for Community Living Supports and Employment First vocational services, we struggle to hire and retain competent staff (which require a lot of training and time to be competent in their role). When they leave to other positions only because of pay, we do a disservice to those we serve. Staff turnover creates stress and anxiety increasing behaviors in the individuals we serve. Also, when we lose staff, our program quality and capacity to provide services diminishes rapidly.

It is unfortunate and unnecessary that the only significant reason for staff to resign from employment in this field is that the service rates don't pay what is needed to adequately pay staff. These DSPs have chosen this career, dedicated the time to be trained (significant training is involved and not funded) and have proven their value as competent and successful DSPs. All the DSPs have been underpaid for years. Every year they ask and expect a wage that can meet living expenses. Of the top paid DSPs on my staff, I lose half every year because we cannot increase salaries. Increased rates = Increased pay for DSPs!

Please increase rates to retain these professionals in the workplace. Thank you for receiving this testimony.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Smith