



**WILLAMETTE**  
**Vocational Resource**  
**Community**

Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs, Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the committee,

My name is Erica Andrews, and I serve as the Executive Director of Willamette Vocational Resource Community, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities. We provide people with the support and opportunities they need to access meaningful employment and take part in decisions that matter to them in their communities. While our services are technically classified as Community Living Supports and Employment Services, that label doesn't begin to capture the depth and impact of our work.

Like many providers in this field, we face significant challenges in hiring and retaining qualified staff. Far too often, we lose dedicated, skilled, and passionate Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) simply because the pay isn't enough to sustain them. These wages are directly tied to the reimbursement rates we receive for our services.

We invest a great deal of time and resources—unfunded—to ensure our DSPs are thoroughly trained and capable of providing high-quality, person-centered care. Yet despite our efforts, the high turnover rate in our field creates instability and hardship for the very individuals we're committed to supporting. These are people who rely on consistent, reliable care to thrive and fully participate in their communities.

I urge you to include increased funding in this budget to raise our reimbursement rates. The most recent wage study clearly demonstrates the funding gap and offers data-driven justification for this much-needed adjustment.

Thank you for considering this critical issue,

Erica Andrews, MS, CRC  
Executive Director