

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

My name is Lucinda Moulding, and I serve on the Board of Directors for Living Opportunities, a nonprofit organization in Jackson County that has proudly partnered with the State of Oregon for over 50 years. Our mission is to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in living full, independent lives as valued members of their communities. I write today in strong support of increased funding for Oregon Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), and to urge your support for:

1. Additional funding for Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, and
2. Annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) tied to inflation, as proposed in HB 2150-2 and SB 133.

Living Opportunities employs more than 140 DSPs who provide critical, hands-on support every day—support that makes it possible for people with I/DD to live independently, participate in the workforce, and thrive in their homes and communities. This is complex, essential work. Our DSPs administer medications, perform nurse-delegated tasks, support mobility and communication, and serve as mentors, job coaches, and, often, a consistent lifeline for the people they support. Yet the average state-funded wage for DSPs across our services remains at \$18.77/hour—far below what is needed to recruit and retain qualified professionals. We currently pay an average of \$21.37/hour (with a starting wage of \$18.50) just to remain staffed. Still, we struggle to compete with wages offered in fast food, retail, and other sectors that require less responsibility and training.

The 2025 DHS Rate & Wage Study revealed a \$558 million funding gap to stabilize this workforce and recommended an average wage of \$23.20/hour. While we understand that closing this gap all at once is a challenge, incremental progress is essential. This is not a luxury—it is the foundation for continuity of care, safety, and dignity for some of Oregon’s most vulnerable citizens.

We also strongly support incorporating an annual COLA for DSP wages and benefits. As the minimum wage continues to rise, our ability to retain qualified staff without adjustments diminishes. Without proactive measures like HB 2150-2 and SB 133, the workforce gap will only deepen—widening by another \$0.35 this July alone.

Unlike other sectors, providers like Living Opportunities cannot simply raise prices. We are entirely reliant on the funding approved by this body. Without sustainable investment, Oregon’s I/DD service system faces continued instability, placing individuals and families at risk.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to protecting the well-being and dignity of Oregonians with I/DD and the professionals who support them. I urge you to prioritize this essential investment in our state’s budget.

Sincerely,

Lucinda Moulding  
Board Member, Living Opportunities