

Submitter: Toni Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

I work for an organization supporting Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I am here today to ask you to prioritize funding for Community Providers and our Direct Support Professionals so we can continue to provide essential services to Oregon citizens with disabilities so they can live and thrive in their communities. Direct Support Professionals perform essential, demanding, skilled work - but are paid below sustainable wages.

We provide support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week regardless of severe weather, natural disasters, or even a global pandemic. We SHOW UP TO WORK to help the people we support safely get through these situations. Using our emergency plans so we can continue to provide quality support for people when they need it most.

We work during holidays and other special occasions. We support people to visit their families' or friends. When that isn't possible, we assist each person to celebrate however they choose, ensuring they have a memorable experience for each occasion.

When a person we support gets sick, we don't stay home to avoid catching what they have. We show up, follow any needed safety protocols, and provide support to get them through their illness. This includes following the doctor's orders and care instructions, administering medications, and treatments.

We help people plan for their future, encouraging them to ask themselves, "What more is possible?" What more is possible in their education, relationships, living situation, or job?

Being a Direct Support Professional takes skills and attributes, such as patience, critical thinking, tenacity, emotional intelligence, compassion, physical fitness, and much more.

I urge you to show Direct Support Professionals that you value us, value fairness and equity in our wages, and will provide the needed funding for people who do this work. I'd also like you to pay attention to House Bill 2510, which adds a cost-of-living increase for IDD services—something our field has not had for years.

Direct Support Professionals deserve fair wages!

Thank you for your time!