

Gordon DiQuattro

6/13/17

HB 2830

Good afternoon Co-Chair Hass, Co-Chair Barnhart. My name is Gordon DiQuattro. I'm a Direct Support Professional, a DSP, at Alvord-Taylor in Eugene/Springfield. I'm here to attest to the urgent need for proper funding for vital I/DD services that support the most vulnerable of Oregonians. While I am happy to see the Speaker Kotek's and Sen. Hass's revenue plan state legislature moving to action "in the right direction" on revenue solutions to fund these essential programs, I'm very concerned that the current proposal is simply insufficient "doesn't go far enough to make game changing investments to provide the services needed to remain a national leader in the I/DD community.

The crisis in group homes is real. I have seen it, I have worked it, I have lived it. Poverty wages, inadequate health insurance, and the demands of an industry that asks us "workers" to take responsibility for another's life are crushing direct support staff. An exploitation of compassion and selflessness within group homes prevents most DSPs from speaking out, from demanding what we deserve: a quality of life commensurate with that which we are expected to provide for the individuals we support. As a result, we are leaving the field in droves and are hovering around a 90% turnover rate annually across the state. For providers, this means nearly 40% of the public money allotted to group homes is wasted on recruiting and training staff that aren't likely to see even their 6 month anniversary. For residents, this means tragedy. It means a never-ending march of strangers going in and out of their homes. For those who need consistency, it means constantly revising and replacing routines. For those who need compassion, it means the loss of dear friends.

The state made a commitment when Fairview closed, that Oregonians with disabilities would be well supported in the community. There is no way to uphold that commitment unless DSPs are

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paid a living wage, one that allows us to provide proper supports without worrying about whether we can both pay our rent and feed our children. The revenue proposal that has been put forth doesn't go far enough to provide lasting reform to an industry in desperate need of funds, in desperate need of transparency and accountability, in desperate need of your support in demanding that large and out of state corporations stop resource mining Oregon at the expense of its most vulnerable citizens.

I refuse to see the individual I support, who cannot speak for himself and has extreme difficulty adjusting to new circumstances and people, compromise his quality of life so that big corporations can continue to exploit our archaic tax structure. I refuse to continue to watch my coworkers and myself suffer financial and psychological hardship for the fiscal comfort of neurotypical businessmen who refuse to support the people who support them. We cannot wait. We cannot compromise. We know you can do better. We need you to do better for all of us.

Thank you.