

To whom it may concern

I have been working with my current company for almost 10 years. I have worked in group homes and day support and recently supported living. Most weeks I spend more time with the people I support than my own family. When I first started I was working two jobs just to put food on the table. I still remember having to swallow my pride and apply for food stamps this was so hard as I had to admit that I couldn't provide for my kids. I have been fortunate in the fact that as the years progressed my husband got a new job and I moved up in positions combined with the gradual raise of Direct Support Professional wages. But, over the years I have worked with fellow staff that still work overtime and two jobs to support their family. People that deserve to make a livable wage. This may not be a flashy job and the work can be physically and emotionally taxing. A lot of my coworkers and I do not do this for the money or the glory of the job. In most cases we are the closest thing to family the people we support have. We are working to make sure their needs are met physically and mentally. Showing up on days when our own life may feel to hard because they are depending on us and advocating for them in a world where things are a little harder for them. I say we don't do it for the money but, a livable wage would make life a lot easier for those who work two jobs or those long hours. So, they can be the best and can continue to support our individuals.

Thank you for listening
Sonia Coombs