

Submitter: A H

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB646

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been working in Child Welfare for four years and I have seen firsthand why it is so important for parents to be allowed to be the paid in-home caregiver for their children.

During my four years at Child Welfare, it has been my job to assess child safety. I worked for three years in Protective Services, it was my job to determine if children were safe enough to remain in the care of their parents or if the Agency needed to intervene. For the last year I have been the Permanency Caseworker, it's my job to provide families with services and tools that influence them to be safe parents.

These families being financially stable is imperative for the well-being of children with disabilities. When a family is financially stressed, they aren't able to provide their child with all their physical and mental health needs. When parents are stressed, they are more likely to have less patience with their children, which can lead to neglect, physical abuse, and mental abuse. Children with disabilities require more patience than the average child.

It is healthier for children with disabilities to have consistent care. There is no consistency in these caregivers. Caregivers often lack the understanding of what the children need, why they need it and how their disability makes them different from other children of similar age. The caregivers who are employed are not drug tested, background checked, specially trained, or educated. These parents not only have lifelong experience with their child, but they also must do research to learn how their child functions, their strengths, weaknesses and any delays they may have.

These parents are becoming professionals in their child's disability and the DSPs have no education background. Most of them do not care nearly as much as a biological parent will and it seems they are looking to make easy money instead of being invested in the child's health, and mental well-being.

At this time, it is challenging to find a caregiver, let alone a caregiver that meshes well with the family dynamics, child's needs, parent's needs, and schedules.

It would be beneficial for the children, their parents and other family members for the parent to receive the money allotted to caregivers. Most of the time the parents must stay in the home with their child even if a caregiver is present. If the parent is

required to be home with their child and are unable to work due to having to care for their child, then it only makes sense to pay the one person who truly treasures these children.

Thank you,