

Submitter: James Bennett

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

Good Afternoon!

My name is James Bennett and I am the Director of Job Launch (Employment) and Tapestry (Day Support Activity) for Partnerships in Community Living (PCL). We support about 300 people with disabilities with 600 team members. I am writing in support of HB 2457. It ensures that DSPs get the wages they deserve, by moving DSP wages to 150% of minimum wage and covering the Paid Leave Oregon Payroll Expense). DSP wages rose significantly after you agreed to fund the current rate model last session. Thank you for this investment. We would not have survived without it and we need to protect and enhance this investment going forward. The pandemic and changing workforce has continued to erode our progress on wages. Even though providers consistently pay wages above the amount that is funded, we (or they) still struggle to hire and retain employees. This complicated, critical work is often paid less than fast food employees. Current reimbursements for these services were built on cost studies that are now years old, so even though service rate models are fully funded, the costs built into these models are significantly behind the current market. I have attached a flier that highlights these key points and shows how DSP wages consistently trend above the reimbursement rate. Please vote yes on HB 2457. DSPs, the people they support and their families are counting on your support!

Best,

James Bennett