

Submitter: Patricia MacKinnon

On Behalf Of: Gabriel MacKinnon

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

I strongly support this Bill! I am a parent provider of a 23 yr old African American man adopted at 3 wks old. He suffers from mental illness as well as an intellectual disability. Not only do my husband and I provide extensive care for our son in our home, we also rely on Every1ndependence for

DSPs to take our son out into the community so he can work on his social connections, appropriate behavior in public, as well as work on increasing his independence. He does not view these DSPs as providers but rather as friends. They have helped boost his self-confidence while working toward meeting his goals. The time he spends with these providers also gives my family a much needed break.

Our son is fortunate to have several friends with special needs and their families also rely on providers from various agencies. These DSPs have enormous responsibility when they're working with adults such as my son or his friends. Oftentimes there are safety issues and they can't take their eyes off of these individuals. Providers need an enormous amount of patience and a respect and understanding for these people in need. Many, unknowingly by their behaviors, draw attention to themselves while in public, and the DSPs need to navigate that as well.

It is very disruptive to these adults when there is a change in provider. Oftentimes that happens because the provider cannot support themselves on the lower wage, and out of necessity, they need to find a higher paying job. Increasing wages for DSPs would positively impact the people supported because of the positive effect it would have for DSPs and staff at not just EVERY1 Independence but all agencies! These DSPs deserve to be compensated at a premium for the difference they're making in the lives of this often forgotten and overlooked population!

Thank you for your consideration!