

Submitter: Meghan Boehm

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

Hello,

My name is Meghan Boehm and I am the Chief Financial Officer of Southern Oregon Aspire, an organization that supports over 150 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with 125 staff 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. The work we do is incredibly important, but we struggle to hire caring and qualified staff with lower than current market wages baked into the rate model. Thankfully, DSP wages rose significantly after you agreed to fund the current rate model last session and I thank you for this investment. We would not have survived without it and we need to protect and enhance this investment going forward, especially given the rising costs, inflation and the upcoming July 2023 minimum wage increase tied to CPI. The pandemic, inflation and changing workforce has continued to erode our progress on wages. Providers across the state consistently pay wages above the amount that is funded and we still struggle to hire and retain employees. This complicated, critical work is often paid less than fast food employees. Current reimbursements for services provided were built on cost studies that are now years old, before the impacts of the pandemic, so even though service rate models are fully funded, the costs built into these models are significantly behind the current market. Please vote yes on HB 2457. DSPs, the people they support and their families are counting on your support!

Thank you,

Meghan Boehm

CFO - Southern Oregon Aspire