

February 8, 2023

From: Lukas Jones
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To: Early Childhood and Human Services Committee Hearing

HIGH IMPORTANCE! RE: Support HB2457

My name is Lukas Jones. I work as a DSP (Direct Support Professional) for Living Opportunities, a non-profit company providing support for adults in Jackson County living with Intellectual and Developmental Disorders (IDD). I am writing to express great concern over the 2023-25 budget and how drastically it impacts our work.

Both my husband and I work as DSPs and love our jobs, but we live paycheck to paycheck to pay our bills and take care of our family. We want to stay working as DSPs but fear that we cannot continue this work unless we are better compensated for our high-level skills. I support adults with IDD to live within the neurotypical community independently. They receive support from me and my coworkers with certain aspects of their daily lives that, without support, would necessitate their moving to a residential facility. I help with daily tasks such as managing medications, cooking meals, grocery shopping, money management, support behavior management, mental health support and critical medical care.

These services exist to protect and support some of the most vulnerable Oregonians. Everyone deserves to live a healthy, rich, and active life regardless of the circumstances in which they were born into. Members of the IDD community have the capacity to grow, adapt, and learn. These individuals are unique in that they have an entirely different outlook on the world. Seemingly the most basic of tasks can be a struggle for some, and as a DSP, I get to experience and share in the pure joy that they feel when they are able to complete that task independently. I am reminded of one time I had arrived to work with a woman named Taylor who struggles with completing chores around the house. As soon as

I walked in, she ran over beaming with joy and proudly declared to me that she had unloaded her dishwasher and taken her trash out to the bin all on her own. This was something that she and I had been working on for a long time and she was so proud that she had been able to do it without cuing or reminding from staff. Celebrating each and every victory in their lives is one reason that I am so proud of the work I do.

Many of the individuals I support are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and as such, find comfort and peace in structure and routine. Another client of mine Andy is one of the clients I have that is diagnosed with ASD. I have seen his day go from great to terrible over seemingly innocuous changes to his day such as if a certain member of staff had to call out sick and his scheduled outing with them was rescheduled or changed to be done with a staff member he wasn't expecting. When our program loses staff, it is hard for Andy to adjust to that change. This most often happens when our staff members are unable to continue working at such low pay and are forced to take another job which pays better.

I am doing my best to support individuals with IDD in my community to live productive lives. Please help me to continue this by recognizing that healthcare professionals such as my husband and myself need higher pay and better access to resources and support. This would enable us to better focus on our clients and provide them with the care that they need and deserve.

[I urge the committee to please support HB2457.](#) Thank you for your time.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lukas Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lukas Jones