



February 8, 2023

To: Rep Reynolds, Chair, house Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
From: Stephanie Beeck, Executive Director
RE: Support for HB 2457

Chair Reynolds and members of the committee,

I am Stephanie Beeck, the incoming Executive Director of Pearl Buck Center, an organization that supports about 300 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The individuals we support rely on Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to live and thrive in their community. Examples of this critical support include: supporting someone build the skills they need to get and maintain a job; helping someone track and pay their bills so that they can live independently; providing intimate personal care; and making sure that someone with complex safety and/or medical needs is supported so that they can make the choice to stay in their family home and everyone is safe while doing so. Being a DSP is a complex job. It is definitely not minimum wage work.

I am writing in support of HB 2457 that ensures that DSPs get the wages they deserve for providing this critical support by moving DSP wages to 150% of the minimum wage and covering the Paid Leave Oregon Payroll Expense. Please vote yes on HB 2457.

As a provider agency, Pearl Buck Center can't simply raise the prices for the supports that we provide to cover the increased costs of operating year after year. As a state partner, we rely on you to approve funding for these services. The current level of funding is based on studies that were completed years ago and are incredibly outdated. We can't continue to pay wages that are falling behind the market for the critical supports that are being provided. Our employees are having to make difficult decisions between staying at a job that they prefer, supporting a mission and people that they love vs taking a job that pays more so that they can pay their rent or afford food and childcare for their family. I urge you to rectify this situation by voting yes on HB 2457 as our DSPs, the people they support, and their families are counting on you.