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On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure: SB646

I'm an autistic woman, mother to four children with developmental and mental disabilities.

The current waiver that permits me to be one of my children's DSP's have changed our lives.

I was able to get my children out of an abusive environment. I had to endure 12 years of abuse to be able to feed, clothe and provide a shelter for my disabled children. I tried many times to get out of that relationship but I couldn't because I have never been able to find reliable, quality, and long lasting PSW's, DSP's or childcare for my children, to be able to work.

All the DSP's and PSW's we have hired have left because the pay is laughable for the amount of work it takes to care for children with disabilities, and without the proper training and knowledge is required to perform such an important job. I contacted DD Services numerous time to get help to train our PSW's, but they don't offer any trainings for specific disabilities. None.

I was called almost everyday from school because at least one of my children had a meltdown, attacked someone or hurt themselves. I had to start homeschooling my children because Hillsboro School District prohibited me to access my children's classroom. Their excuse was that children's privacy was at risk when I entered the self-contained classrooms. Which I know is a blatant lie, public schools are not protected by HIPPA and the files of students shouldn't be discussed in classrooms. I email the HSD Special Education director to ask her what law or policy prevented me from entering as a volunteer in my children's classroom and she responded with a "show me the law or policy that prevents me from not letting you in" Right there and then, I knew my children were not safe at school and decided to homeschool them. SSI (and most public assistance) takes into consideration all members of the household income and assets, but SSI can only be used by the disabled individual. Every single time we ask for any public assistance or support, we need to jump so MANY loops, it's disheartening.

I want you to know that we (disabled individuals) were born in a society that makes us feel subhuman every second of our lives since our very first breath, and I want you to look within and think, but REALLY think, in how YOU contribute to that.

I strongly believe hours must be capped for parents to only 40hrs/week and put incentives in place to hire and resources to train PSW/DSP's.

I'm currently getting paid for only 40hr/week by choice, even when I'm caring and providing supports to my children basically 24/7 and I do it because even though I

love my children and I know I'm currently the only person capable and knowledgeable enough to provide proper supports, I don't want to be their sole caretaker and supporter. I want the government to work on finding ways to hire and train quality PSW/DSP's. I want the government to hold schools accountable for not following IEP's and traumatizing parents and children, I want government to create an inclusive society for parents like me, for children like mine. I want the government to stop using the income of the whole family to decide if a disabled individual qualifies for SSI or any other resource. I want the government to not make disabled individuals the least of their priorities when making legislative decisions.

Please, stop making our lives more difficult than they already are! If you take away from our family the benefit of me being one of my children's DSP's, we will have to face homelessness or we will have to go back to an environment of abuse to be able to eat and have a roof over our heads. I would be happy to not be one of my children's DSP's, I would love to be only their mother, I would love to have a career, to send my children to public school, I would love to not be dependent on public assistance. But have you, as society, provided people like me, people like my children the equity needed to help us thrive in your society? No, you haven't.