



Dignity. Respect. Opportunity.

February 8, 2023

To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf and Members of the Committee:

Community Services, Incorporated (CSI) supports about one hundred people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in residential settings in Washington and Multnomah counties. When fully staffed, CSI needs to employ about 150 direct support professionals (DSPs) to meet the needs of the people who choose CSI as their service provider. I am writing in support of HB 2457 which would ensure that DSPs are paid a living wage and help stabilize the DSP workforce.

On behalf of the DSPs, I would like to thank the legislature for funding the new rate model last legislative session. As a result, CSI was able to significantly increase DSP wages. Without that rate increase, we would have been forced to close programs and serve fewer very vulnerable people.

Despite the additional funding, we continue to struggle finding enough DSPs to meet the needs of the people entrusted to our care. We simply can not keep up with inflation and additional workplace expenses. DSPs provide an essential and complicated service that requires a high level of skill and discernment; yet because of the wage, we are competing with fast food and retail businesses for employees.

Please support the passage of HB 2457. You will be protecting the investment the State of Oregon has already made in DSPs, and protecting the future for DSPs and the people they support.

Sincerely,

Kelly Thran
Chief Executive Officer
Community Services, Incorporated