

Submitter: Sue Crader

On Behalf Of: HB2457

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

I am Sue Crader, Executive Director for Ashland Supportive Housing. 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.

We have supported people with I/DD with residential and community based supports since 1982. I have been the Executive Director since 2002. In my 20 years in this position we have struggled to provide a living wage for our DSPs. We have had to budget carefully and lobby hard to stay ahead of minimum wage and at times to stay ahead of McDonald's starting wage. Historically our turnover was high due to the low wage coupled with the expectation of professional level services, even though we are known for being an exceptional employer.

Thank you for the wage increase last year - it came at just the right time to prevent further erosion of services due to lack of staffing. Our DSPs took note and were heartened by the support. Today however due to inflation the purchasing power of the increased wage has declined and wages in other areas are again catching up to our starting wage - we are all struggling to find employees in this market. ASH has cut as much as we can to provide the highest starting wage possible, which is now above the rate funded in the approved rate model.

Current reimbursements for these services were built on cost studies that are now years old, 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! It will help to stabilize an industry that truly needs your support.