

Submitter: Maeve Allen-Horth
On Behalf Of: RISE
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure: HB2457

Hello, my name is Maeve Allen-Horth and I am a DSP working in Roseburg Oregon with RISE. Our program is all about community inclusion. We work to bring those all over the spectrum both physically and mentally to a place where they can better integrate into society. I have two wonderful individuals who I get to work for who have changed my life. Watching them learn and accomplish things they have never tried before brings feelings of pride and joy that are unexplainable (watching one run properly for the first time or sending in that new application to a job for the other). I imagine it's the way a parent feels the first time they see their kid walk. One of my current individuals has intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as autism. He is someone with so much potential and he works harder than anyone I know; he spends hours on his schoolwork, and he tries his hardest when we work on any subject. So much positive change has occurred since we've started working together: his ability to make decisions, his tone in conversation, his handwriting, and his ability to run and do jumping jacks has improved drastically. He could be independent and integrated into society so smoothly with just a little help.

We unfortunately live in an age where millennials and younger are likely to never see social security checks. The SSA trust fund runs out in 2034. Those who were born in 1997 (myself included) are expected to retire 30 years after the SSA fund is completely gone. Right now we are paying between 6% and 12% of our income for older generations to retire and then be left in the dust as it were. After 2034 Social security will fully convert to a pay as you go system. This will generate significantly less money, but we will continue to watch real wages continually fall. It's expected to see wages fall and social security taxes and retirement age go up within the next 10 years. This isn't even to mention that to hit the poverty threshold according to the US Census you need to make \$35,801. That is about \$17.21/ an hour if you work 40 hours a week (or \$2983.43/ month). Taking into account that the average median rent from 2022 was between \$1976 and \$2000 according to npr.org and rent.com, as well as food costing the average American ~\$438/month (global rankings), and gas costing between \$150-\$200 a month most people don't even have enough to put into surprise medical bills or emergencies. I personally drive between an hour and a half to two and a half hours a day for my individuals and spend about \$30 on gas every week alone, and in a household of 3, groceries can even surpass the median I mentioned.

DSPs and people everywhere deserve a wage increase to sustain basic living habits. To be able to fix my car if needed, and to not have to worry about rent after. I can place more time and energy into the people who need it most. If I could make \$23/hour I might be able to live a little bit more comfortably and reduce my chance of burnout. We live in an age where no single person on minimum could afford an

apartment on their own; it's time to recognize we need a change in wages and this is a fantastic start. Please consider the good this would do specifically in this field which is recognized for high turnover rates due to overwork and stress. It's a mentally taxing job that deserves pay equal to the work we put into it.

Sincerely,
Maeve Allen-Horth