

Submitter: Connie Strawbridge

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2457

DSPs Deserve A Living Wage. Please support HB2457

To the Chair and Members of the House Committee on Human Services.

I have been working as a DSP in day programs both in California and Oregon for over 5 years. Previous to my employment as a DSP, I was a board member at The Arc of Amador and Calaveras in California for 3 years. I am currently an In-Home DSP. Though it would have been my desire to become an employee in this sector much sooner, I couldn't reconcile devoting my time to such a low-paying position, despite my "heart" for the job. In fact, it takes a special person with a combination of skill, patience and compassion to take on the challenges and responsibilities connected to doing meaningful work that makes all the difference to the people we serve. As a board member, I was an advocate at the program level to increase staff wages. It was explained to me that this was the industry standard and needed to be addressed through legislation to increase the funding. The truth is that many wonderful workers have been forced to leave the field in order to meet their financial obligations. It is my hope that this will be remedied and this amazing workforce will be appreciated and compensated fairly. One other issue I would like to address is the need to reimburse client mileage at the federally recommended rate of 65.5 cents per mile. In-home DSPs are expected to use their own vehicles for the care provided. At the 51 cents per mile offered for client transportation, after the expense of gas, there wouldn't be enough left over to purchase a new set of tires, let alone vehicle maintenance. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please vote to support HB2457.