

Submitter: Jennifer Thomas

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human
Services

Measure: HB5026

Sen. Wlnsvey Campos, Co-Chair

Rep. Andrea Valderrama, Co-Chair

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human
Services Support for HB 5026 – DHS Budget and Intellectual/Developmental
Disabilities March 2, 2023

Co-Chair Campos and Valderrama,

I write to offer my support for a fully funded I/DD budget. In 2021, the Legislature made historic investments in services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and for the first time the I/DD system was FULLY FUNDED. Even though this investment allowed us to increase wages for DSPs by \$1.25 an hour (current average reimbursement wage for DSPs at \$17.81), we still struggle with staff shortages. We must continue to move the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce out of crisis.

Additional increases in wages are needed to address the current workforce shortage. Please protect your investment and continue fully funding I/DD rates while prioritizing DSPs!

I specifically urge you to support:

? ODDS's POP 132 – Targeted Rate Increase estimated to cost \$162M ? Includes wage inflation and rate increases that bring DSP wages in payment category 1 to \$19.36, payment category 2 to \$20.38, and to \$22.42 in payment category 4 in the first year of the biennium. Increases the health insurance assumption to \$628.45 (currently \$525) per employee per month and adds the 0.4% employer Paid Leave Oregon payroll tax pick-up.

? HB 2457 – 150% of Minimum Wage + 1% Paid Leave Oregon Pick-up estimated to cost \$116.9M

? This bill will make further investments into DSP wages – because DSP work is not minimum wage work! HB 2457 statutorily sets DSP wages across the state at 150% of the metro minimum wage and includes the full 1% Paid Leave Oregon pick up (.4% Employer + .6% Employee pick-up).

I have worked in the field of Disability Services for 13 years and I see the difference that this workforce makes in the lives of one of Oregon's most vulnerable populations. Consistent, well-trained, and well-paid staff is the key to helping people live their best lives.

Please value the work and raise the wage!

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Thomas