

Submitter: Janet Yousey

On Behalf
Of: Shangri-La

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

Measure: HB5026

Chair Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

Please prioritize IDD wages and support full funding of IDD services. I am asking that you not only protect your previous investment, but that you continue to help move this workforce out of crisis by supporting HB 2457 - moving DSP wages to 150% of minimum wage.

At Shangri-La, we support 1000 people every year with disabilities and disadvantages to recognize and achieve their potential.

First, I need to express my gratitude for the investments you made last session by fully funding the rate models, allowing providers like us to significantly increase Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages. Second, I strongly encourage you to invest in our DSP workforce, again this session, by voting for and advocating for HB 2457. The fully funded rate models were an amazing step, but with rising inflation eroding our progress on wages, amidst a global staffing shortage, and COVID-19 continuing to be a real threat to the people we serve and to our staff, we need to do more to protect and support our direct workforce. By tying our rate models to 150% of minimum wage, we have a chance to stabilize our workforce now and for the future.

I'd like to take a moment to explain the work of DSPs at Shangri-La. DSPs thrive on supporting people in reaching their goals. These goals may include getting and maintaining employment, applying for and attending college, developing a purposeful presence in their community, caring for their physical, mental and emotional health. DSPs assist with daily living supports, such as hygiene and eating. DSPs teach skills and coach people we support in jobs, in accessing their community, in advocating for themselves. DSPs are conversationalists, friends, connectors, and so much more.

DSPs are critical people, doing critical work -- please vote yes on HB 2457 and pave a path for sustainable wages for DSPs.

Thank you!

Janet Yousey
Chief Executive Officer
Shangri-La