



March 2, 2023

**Dear Sen. Winsvey Campos and Co-Chair Rep. Andrea Valderrama
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services**

In Support of HB 5026 – DHS Budget and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

In Support of HB 2457- Value the work and raise the wage- Increase the minimum wage of DSPs to 150% of Oregon’s Minimum wage.

I am writing to request your help. At TVW, we serve over 150 people with disabilities, those living with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and other disabilities. The people who do the direct coaching and support are skilled professionals that deserve a sustainable wage. The workforce crisis being experienced has harmed our ability to serve more people with disabilities and it is expected to worsen without your support.

I am writing to support 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 DSP wages by \$1.25 an hour, we still struggle with staff shortages across the state. We must continue to move the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce out of this crisis. Additional increases in wages are needed to address the ongoing workforce shortage. Please protect your previous investment in our workforce and continue fully funding I/DD rates, while prioritizing DSPs!

We urgently need you to support the following:

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 invest further 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)

Please value the work and raise the wage!

Covid and the ongoing labor shortage crisis have left us searching for employees who can support individuals with disabilities. At the same time, inflation and the increase in wage-based competition continue to create hiring and retention challenges. As more Oregonians with Disabilities are born or move to our state, more DSPs will be needed. It makes your support on these issues even more important. The impossibly competitive hiring market continues to be an issue; please help us **stabilize and create a long-term method to fund the Oregon DSP workforce.**

We ask that you support HB 5026 and HB 2457 to ensure that agencies serving people with disabilities can continue to recruit, maintain, and develop the future workforce that supports Oregonians with disabilities.

This link provides more information about the HB 2457

bill: <https://oregonresource.box.com/s/of9s49qupwlqozg44qize9w65mxpde4n>

We thank you for your attention to the issues outlined in this letter and ask again for your support of **HB 5026 and HB 2457.**

Regards,

Carol J. Davis
Board President
TVW, Inc
503-970-2940