

Submitter: Argie Chantavong

On Behalf
Of: TVW Inc

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

Measure: HB5026

Dear Co-Chair Campos and Valderrama,

I am writing to express my support for a fully funded I/DD budget. Your support of these bills is critical to ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have access to the services and care they need.

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 across the state. It is vital that we continue to move the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce out of crisis. Additional increases in wages are needed to address the current workforce shortage. I urge you to please protect your investment 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. It will also increase 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.

In addition to POP 132, I also urge you to support 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 urge you to please value the work and raise the wage so we can continue to provide the highest quality of care for Oregonians with disabilities.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Argie Chantavong