

Submitter: Ronald Lyman  
On Behalf Of: All DSPs in the State of Oregon  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

I want to keep you in the loop regarding information we are sharing at Joint Ways and Means Roadshows across the state on the importance of valuing the work and increasing Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) wages – and welcome your support! As a provider in your district it is critical the State provides funding to raise the wage for this crucial workforce that supports people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities. These workers' wages depend on you. Without additional funding, DSP wages will continue to fall behind other industries.

Please support Direct Support Professional(DSP) wages in this budget session by supporting the Office of Developmental Disabilities' proposed POP 132 which provides an increase in DSP wages and addresses healthcare inflation.

DSP wages did increase after the 2021 Oregon legislature agreed to fund the current rate model. Thank you for this investment! However, wages across the State have continued to rise, and we are once again falling behind. In July the pressure will mount even further as minimum wage in Oregon makes another jump. The average staff vacancy rate amongst providers is currently 23% - an unsustainable workforce shortage.

As a state partner, providers rely on you to fund our rate model and DSP wages. Unfortunately, the state is only currently reimbursing providers an average of \$17.81 per hour for DSPs. This leads to our complicated critical work paying less than fast food workers. Most providers are forced to rely on fundraising or scrimping in other areas to pay wages that currently average \$18.99. And still it is not enough to compete. Providers are forced to close programs and reduce capacity (and cannot take referrals to serve new people due to the ongoing workforce shortage. Each year minimum wage will continue to increase and without your help we will fall further and further behind.

We need your support. Please value the work and raise the wage by supporting ODDS POP 132 in the budget. I understand that the budget is tight, but DSPs, the people they support and their families are counting on your support! Please make DSP wages a priority.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Ronald Lyman  
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