

Submitter: Jayden Bratcher  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

I believe that it is crucial that we raise the DSP wages in Oregon. I have personally worked as a DSP in a 5-bed group home ran by Albertina Kerr for a little under 3 years. DSPs are crucial for people in the IDD/DD community. Everyone in the community has different wants/needs, and we ensure safety while helping them live their lives, and achieve their personal goals, as each of them deserves to. We are responsible for making sure that they get the personal care that they need such as food, hydration, toileting, dressing, and even just making sure that they are able to get out of bed. We get them to medical appointments and make sure they get their medications on time. We take the people we support out and help them be included in activities within the community. This could include taking them out to eat, taking them shopping, taking them to concerts/sports games, and also traveling, everything most of us without disabilities can do on our own. I personally took one of the people that I support on a week-long trip to Texas to visit family. This was an amazing experience for not only him, but also his family. They were so grateful to be able to spend time with him and were so appreciative that a DSP was able to attend the trip and assist him while we were there. I truly enjoy my job, but I am just not making enough money. Turnover in my field is very high, and the majority of that is due to us not making a livable wage. The cost of living in Oregon is drastically increasing, and 20\$ an hour is just not keeping up with the ever-growing expenses of food, rent and utilities. We are responsible for supporting the lives of people in the community, but don't make enough money to support ourselves. Caring for others is mentally taxing and we are at risk of burnout due to this and the long hours we work. BARELY living paycheck to paycheck is just adding to that stress when we are supposed to be taking care of our own needs while at home. We deserve to be making a livable wage with the work that we do for this community. It is very discouraging to see that people working in less mentally taxing/ physically demanding fields are making around the same amount as us, while we are responsible for people's livelihood. 25\$ an hour would be a fair wage for DSPs and would help with the turnover rate in our field. Thank you for reading, and again, I believe that it is crucial that we raise the DSP wages in Oregon.