

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

I am writing to you today as a dedicated Direct Support Professional (DSP) with ten years of experience serving individuals with disabilities. Over the past decade, I have worked through ten Christmases, Thanksgivings, Easters, and Halloweens—holidays spent away from my own family so that those I support could experience a sense of stability, care, and dignity. When I myself am experiencing housing and food instability due to low wages. I have gone home from shifts with bruises, scratches, and emotional exhaustion after being physically attacked, yet I return because I know the work I do is vital.

Being a DSP is not just a job—it is a commitment to improving the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens. It is hard work, both physically and emotionally, but it is also incredibly rewarding. However, the financial reality of this profession is becoming unsustainable. The cost of living continues to rise, yet wages for DSPs have not kept pace. Many of my colleagues have been forced to leave the field simply because they cannot afford to stay, and without significant action, there will soon be too few of us left to provide the care that so many individuals desperately need.

This crisis is not just about us as workers—it is about the people we serve. When DSPs leave due to low wages, individuals with disabilities lose trusted caregivers, routine, and quality support. They deserve better, and so do the professionals who dedicate their lives to this work.

I urge you to take immediate action to increase funding for Direct Support Professionals' wages. We do this work out of passion and commitment, but passion does not pay rent or put food on the table. If we do not address this issue now, the consequences will be devastating for both DSPs and the individuals who rely on us.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to those we serve. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and to share firsthand the realities of this profession. Please stand with us and support the wage increases needed to sustain this critical workforce.

Sincerely,

Mikaila Mullaney
Living Opportunities