

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

I am writing to you as a dedicated Direct Support Professional (DSP) and a mother of four who struggles to put food on the table for my own children, all while making sure my clients receive nutritious meals and quality care. For years, I have spent holidays—Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, and Halloween—at work instead of with my family, because the individuals I support rely on me to be there. I have come home from shifts exhausted, sometimes after being physically attacked, yet I continue to show up because I know how important this work is.

Being a DSP is not just a job—it is a calling to serve and uplift individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have the dignity, care, and stability they deserve. The work is hard, both physically and emotionally, but it is also deeply rewarding. However, the financial strain of this profession is becoming unbearable. Wages have remained stagnant while the cost of living has skyrocketed, leaving many of us struggling to provide for our own families. I know many colleagues who have been forced to leave this field simply because they can no longer afford to stay. If something does not change soon, there will not be enough of us left to care for the vulnerable individuals who depend on us.

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

I urge you to take immediate action to increase funding for DSP wages. We do this work because we care, but passion alone cannot pay the bills or feed our children. Without competitive wages, the DSP workforce will continue to shrink, and the consequences will be devastating for those who rely on our care.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to supporting this vital workforce. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and share my firsthand experience. Please stand with us and support the wage increases necessary to sustain this critical profession.

Sincerely,
Megan Sankey
Living Opportunities