

Supporting Testimony for HB5006

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bailee Heer, and I am representing Dungarvin Oregon, a provider organization supporting adults and children who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities, and I strongly support HB5006. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of increased funding for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) services.

The Oregon DHS Wage & Rate study has identified a \$558 million funding gap in IDD services, highlighting years of chronic underfunding. This urgent investment is necessary to address workforce shortages, stabilize services, and ensure continued support for individuals with disabilities.

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) Deserve Fair Wages

DSPs perform skilled, essential work yet are paid unsustainable wages. While the state models DSP wages at \$18.77 per hour, providers must pay at least \$2.50 more to stay competitive with industries like retail and fast food. This wage gap leads to high turnover, service instability, and a diminished quality of care. Investing in fair wages will improve staff retention and ensure individuals receive consistent, high-quality support.

IDD Providers Are Struggling to Stay Afloat

Unlike other industries, IDD providers cannot raise rates or offset costs through private pay or fundraising. Many are exceeding state-funded wage models just to maintain staffing, rapidly depleting financial reserves. Without increased funding, service access will decline, and providers will be forced to close or reduce services.

Legislative Action is Needed Now

The IDD workforce crisis demands immediate action in the 2025-27 budget. I urge you to:

- Prioritize IDD services and work toward closing the \$558 million funding gap.
- Ensure DSPs receive competitive wages to sustain a stable workforce.
- Prevent provider closures and service reductions that impact Oregon's most vulnerable residents.

Oregon must act now to ensure equitable, sustainable care for individuals with disabilities, for this reason I urge you to pass HB5006. Thank you for your time and commitment to this critical issue.