



STEP FORWARD ACTIVITIES

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To the House Committee of Early Childhood and Human Services:

I am writing in full support of HB2150 with the -1 Amendment.

I have worked for Step Forward for over 30 years, starting out as a DSP many years ago. Thinking back, I can remember a nearly 10 year period where SFA was not able to give raises to our DSPs due to stagnant agency funding.

As the Executive Director, I have seen Step Forward bring our wages closer to a competitive wage over the years, but we continue to struggle recruiting and retaining employees due to funding. We often have to weigh wages increases against other program needs because the rates do not support annual cost of living increases.

A stable DSP workforce is vital to providing quality services to the people we support. Ensuring livable wages is essential to building a stable workforce.

Please pass HB 2150 with -1 Amendment, this will show the DSPs and all of the providers how Oregon supports the work they do, and help build a sustainable model that will strengthen the I/DD support community.

Sincerely

Sasha R. Gazley
Executive Director