

Good Evening, Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Lisa Ledson. I'm a registered nurse, a disability advocate, and the mother of Hannah, my 12-year-old with complex medical and developmental disabilities.

Hannah has quadriplegic cerebral palsy, cortical visual impairment, and intractable epilepsy, and she uses a wheelchair. She needs 24/7 care, and for over a decade, I've been her primary caregiver because the direct care workforce simply isn't there. Being paid through SB 538 would allow me to provide consistent, safe, medically necessary support and the ability to receive health insurance and retirement savings. Coming federal changes jeopardize everything because the blood, sweat, and tears I do for Hannah now aren't considered "work."

We know that well-resourced families produce better K–12 outcomes. But for some reason, we refuse to connect the dots between **forced unpaid caregiving**, poverty, and **struggling special education students**. When families like mine are exhausted, under-resourced, and constantly fighting for services, our kids fall further behind. Meanwhile, Special Education Funding remains capped and chronically underfunded, and now we face a potential \$170 million cut to IDEA.

These systems—home care and education—are not separate. They are deeply intertwined. SB 538 and increased special education funding are not just line items but **investments in outcomes, stability, and equity** for our most vulnerable children. The cost of inaction—crisis care, emergency hospitalizations, and academic failure—is far greater.

Please pass SB 538, lift the special education caps, fund the new weights, and fully fund high-cost disability. Our children deserve a system that doesn't leave their survival—and success—up to chance.

Thank you for your time.

Lisa Ledson

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