

Alex: Good afternoon Co-Chair Leiber, Co-Chair Sanchez, and the members of the committee, my name is Alex Miles and I have the incredible privilege to work alongside some of the most extraordinary yet fragile members of our society through my job at Shangri-La.

Hello to the committee.

Thank you for this chance to speak from my heart.

My name is Jeanne and I live at home with 4 other people and we have staff there all day and night, everyday. I also go to LEAP during the week, to work on skills and hang out with my friends.

Alex: Jeanne and I get to work together on an almost daily basis and have prepared our testimony together as one for today. Jeanne, Do you like where you live?

Yes I do.

Alex: How do the staff at home and LEAP help you?

They cook our food, they give us medicine, they teach me new things, they talk to me when I need a friend, they keep me safe, they help me find fun things to do, they encourage me, they help me believe in myself.

Alex: To help explain the importance of the staff in your life, imagine for a moment, there were no staff to help you in your life. What does that look for you?

That would be bad.

Alex: Why bad?

There would be no help. What happens if there is a seizure, what happens when we need medications, what happens if I fall off the wheelchair, what happens if they are choking, what happens when we need to pay the bills, what happens when I need to go shopping and I can't get there or I cant find my way, or I get lost? A life without the staff is not a life, and a life without good, dependable staff is a life sentence.

Alex: Thank you for sharing that Jeanne, I know it is not easy to be so vulnerable and share your feelings in a space like this. You have expressed to me that it can be tough when your preferred staff leave & we tend to have pretty high turnover in this field (which can be related to the combination of the demanding, skilled work and yet

paid wages that are typically below a sustainable level.) Jeanne, why is it tough for you?

Makes me sad when they leave.

Alex: I get that, the loss and grief experienced over time really adds up. How do you feel when you have new staff supporting you?

I feel alright, but it can be annoying to have to explain my needs and wants all of the time. For example, when I had a new staff that stood too close and made me uncomfortable, or tried to sit in my lap and almost broke my legs.

Alex: Oh yeah, I can see how that would be annoying and frustrating for you. Jeanne, do you remember why we are here today? Is there anything you would like to ask of the committee?

We need more help please, we need more good people to help us. We need the committee to give more money for the staff. Thank you for your consideration and time today.

Alex: Thank you for this opportunity today, please prioritize funding for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities this session.