

Submitter: Krista Smith
On Behalf Of: RISE
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Hello Members of the Committee,

My name is Krista Smith, and I am the Executive Director of RISE Services, Inc. I've spent the past 20 years dedicated to supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) here in Oregon—beginning my career as a Direct Support Professional (DSP). RISE is a nonprofit organization that serves over 500 individuals statewide and employs nearly as many DSPs.

I'm writing today not just on behalf of RISE, but also for the many organizations across Oregon that share our mission and are struggling to pay DSPs a fair, livable wage. Our system relies almost entirely on state and federal funding to sustain these essential services. Yet each year, we fall further behind.

A recent DHS study, mandated by the Legislature, found that the current funding gap for IDD services is an alarming \$558 million—and growing. At RISE, we pay DSPs more per hour than what the state reimburses, and we still face critical staffing shortages. Meanwhile, DSPs—who do life-changing, often life-sustaining work—are struggling to make ends meet. Compounding the issue, increasing regulatory demands and administrative red tape continue to stretch our already limited resources.

This funding shortfall has a very real cost—not just in dollars, but in lives: Individuals with disabilities losing consistent support. Families left without services. DSPs who are burned out and underpaid. Despite their unwavering dedication, they're being asked to do more with less, year after year.

I urge you to prioritize and increase funding for IDD services in the DHS budget to begin closing the \$558 million gap. We also ask that you fully fund HB 2150, which would provide annual cost-of-living adjustments to prevent us from continuing to fall further behind.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,
Krista Smith
Executive Director, RISE Services, Inc.