

Submitter: Casandra Jones
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1505

Senator Jama and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to strongly oppose SB 1505. It is important to note that the entire IDD community stands against this bill. Adding another costly layer of bureaucracy to services that are already heavily regulated benefits no one. The IDD community already has an engaging process for developing rules and policies. This process welcomes input from self-advocates, family members, providers, union representatives, and state and county officials.

Please do not reduce this inclusive process to a board of 11 unelected individuals making decisions about an industry they do not understand. This bill will create confusing wage and benefit standards that will mean little if they are not funded by the legislature. It will also standardize services that are anything but standard, as there are many different IDD services, each uniquely designed to meet the needs and preferences of the individuals using them. We must not remove choice and individualism for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Providers already pass on any rate increases to their Direct Support Professionals. The evidence is clear in the Rate and Wage study, which shows an average wage that is well above what is currently being reimbursed. The Rate and Wage model provides the tools and information necessary to fairly increase wages and benefits to a sustainable level. It would be unwise to waste funding on a board to tell you this when you have already paid for the study.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 1505. Do not allow an unelected board to take sweeping control of these essential services.

Sincerely,
Casandra Jones