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On Behalf Of:
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1505

I am a Personal Support Worker and have been doing this work for 10 years. We need consistency between all agencies. Those who work directly for the state are being trained better than agencies are training workers. If I hire an agency worker to work for my son, my son is the employer of record, and those workers are trained going by his behavioral plan, not the agency's standard. Also, when my son is the employer of record, he is the person who says what hours someone works and what that person's job is. Agencies do not cater to the client, they cater to their employees. They tell us when an employee can come, and there is not always consistency in caregivers. People can be sent out who do not know him or his needs.

I am a retired nurse (BSN) with a neurosciences minor. I know I have the best training to support my son and his needs. I have taken a cut in pay because it is too hard to know my son's needs are not always met. However, I cannot do it all. I need a break or I get caretaker burnout. I need those who are giving that break to be consistent with the care they give. I need to come off of that break and have my son's needs be taken care of, not to come on and pick up where someone dropped the pieces. While I do not expect them to have my training, I do expect they are willing to learn and be consistent. This consistency is so important with autism spectrum disorders. We also need consistency with pay. People go to the agencies because they pay more than workers who directly contract with the state. In addition to this higher wage, the agencies also need their reimbursement for providing services. If this disparity was not there, we could save a tremendous amount on the budget that is going to administrators, not workers, not clients.

There was a time when workers who directly contracted through the state could not work overtime. We were told if we went to an agency, we could get overtime hours and pay. However, the agencies do not offer good insurance. We could not go. My older son is also a care provider and he has kidney failure and is on dialysis. He could not go with this insurance because it would not cover his dialysis care. I have just been recently diagnosed with cancer. I could not go with an agency because their insurance would not cover my needs well and I would have to put money that would go toward my housing and basic needs toward medical care and go without. Since my client lives in my home, if I had to take money that would go toward our housing for my medical care, he would not have the home he lives in now. He would not even be able to afford a small apartment on his SSI income. I work a lot of hours. If I had higher wages, I would be able to put those funds toward people who could help us with non-care tasks, so I could focus more on the care my son needs.

Please support SB 1505.