

March 14, 2023

Dear State Representatives,

I am writing to you today as a mother of a person with a disability. But I am also writing because I am deeply concerned about the individuals who live in group homes and have no one in their lives but the direct support professional.

As a mother, I have seen firsthand the incredible impact that direct support professionals have on the lives of individuals with disabilities. Many times, the direct support professional is the first and only person the person with a disability sees in the morning and the last one at night.

As a mother, I have seen firsthand the much-needed care and support provided by the direct support professional, helping individuals to live independently, build relationships, and participate in their communities. Direct support professionals serve as the crucial connection between people with disabilities and the necessary services for their well-being, often being the sole representative at their meetings. In their absence, many individuals would only be known through written notes.

As a mother, I have seen direct support professionals barely making ends meet to provide for their own families. I have heard of family members stepping in to help the direct support professional who struggles to provide for their families, with some even buying them sets of tires for transportation to and from work. As a mother myself, I have witnessed firsthand the financial difficulties that direct support professionals face. Direct support professionals make sacrifices solely out of love.

As a mother, I worry about the future of my son and others like him. I worry that without adequate support, they will be left behind and forgotten. Direct support professionals are the backbone of the system that supports individuals with disabilities and the family, and we must invest in them if we want to ensure that our loved ones and others receive the care and support, they need now and into their future.

I urge you to support the DODD budget in full and make this important investment in our state's direct support professionals. This is not just a matter of fairness; it is a matter of ensuring that our loved ones and others receive the care and support they deserve and to build a more just and equitable society for all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jan Dougherty

doughertyjan@gmail.com

330-904-4355