Linda Lehman
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce
3/22/23

We are aging caregivers who have always been involved in the care, transportation and guidance of our 44 year old developmentally disabled daughter, Amanda. However, our ability to provide for all our daughter's needs is no longer a reality. Amanda is able to work in the community and be a successful taxpaying citizen who contributes to care of young children in a local daycare. During Covid her daycare was deemed essential as one of the few who stayed open to care for the children of critical workers. Amanda worked many extra hours during those difficult months as she was dedicated to her job. However, as a person with disabilities, Amanda needs help with certain areas of her life to be successful in her job. For many years she had a provider for five hours a week who supported her needs. Those five hours were enough to transport her to the places she needed to go to complete tasks essential to her well being. As Amanda's parents we are in our seventies and are now suffering health issues that involve cancer, knee, hip, and multiple ankle surgeries. We can provide love and support in the home but Amanda needs more. The DSP crisis is huge for Amanda and it impacts her well being. Individuals with disabilities count on their routines. They do best when they can count on their simple needs being met, someone being there for five hours that ensures they can succeed the rest of the week. Without Amanda's transportation service which is understaffed and underpaid she will not be able to get to her job. Amanda who has worked at her daycare for 15 years has formed bonds with the children and families and they have learned that even with her disability she has amazing abilities. We are filling in the gaps now but we are not going to be able to do so for much longer. Please make DSP pay the priority it needs to be.Not just for the providers, but think about the children in the day care, their parents, their families.The DSPs make a lot of things possible.