

Allison Young  
Testimony on HB 33  
Supporting the DD Workforce

My name is Allison Young and I am a pediatric occupational therapist, small business owner as well as a Mom to an amazing child with Down Syndrome. We have applied for a level I waiver during the covid pandemic when our son was born. We have not obtained a caregiver to provide HPC services for our family and no daycare center in our area will take our son, due to his high need for personal assistance for a myriad of things (self care, safety, feeding, etc.). After we tried a few HPC providers who either didn't show, no-showed visits or quite with no notice, my husband took a leave of absence from work. He has not been able to return to work, due to us not having a caregiver for our son for now 2 years. With no end in sight we live on a 6 month notice form DODD as to whether our parental right to take care of our son will be removed as a paid parent provider. This is stressful and let me tell you, the pay is not paying our bills either. We are stuck because there are no HPC providers that are reliable or trained to work appropriately with our young child. We need qualified workers that actually care about children and adults with disabilities and moreover they need to be trained. They need to have management to follow-up with them on the basics. Basics include: work ethic, what to wear to work, how to talk to people with disabilities and how to engage with families. This has led us, as a family to choose US as the provider, while continuing to search for an adequate individual. But choosing us as parents to be the caregiver also comes with costs. For us, we have to live on one income as a household and we will also run out of his waiver budget within 6 months. Wage increases for agencies needs to be looked at, as they are not always passing the money down to their workers... Please consider a wage increase as well as additional training that is VERY MUCH needed for DSP's.

Thank you,

Allison Young, MS OTR/L