

Christine Zimmer
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

My nephew Ray has multiple developmental disabilities, he is non-verbal and requires constant care 24/7. This includes giving him medication, feeding, bathing, and dressing. As he is unable to communicate what he wants, thinks, or feels, his behaviors can be unpredictable at times. Those caring for him must be on high alert to guard him from injury. Ray will always have physical and intellectual obstacles to overcome and will need care like this for his entire life.

Part of the reason Ray is thriving is that he has people who don't just care for him, they care ABOUT him. In many cases, Direct Support Professionals become just like family to those they care for. We are trusting Direct Support Professionals with the lives of our family members. In some cases this can be a job where someone can be easily burned out, especially when the job doesn't pay enough to allow DSPs to satisfy their own needs like shelter, food, etc. It is critical that we begin to invest in those people who care for those most vulnerable!