

Jennifer Zilke
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

This crisis has impacted my family along with multiple other families that we personally know. Having a child who has more needs than a typical child is already stressful. Then you add the fact that there is limited funding for these individuals and their care practically makes it impossible to find help. I am a parent of an individual who will never be able to safely care for herself independently. This means, that in order to provide for the needs of our family, I need to be able to trust other people to help me care for her. The funding for these individuals has made this impossible for us. The amount of pay that the DSP's and nurses make in this field is too low. People want to work in this field, but to make enough money to survive, they would never be home with their own family. People cannot survive on this pay and end up leaving the field due to better paying jobs. This limits staffing, which limits the availability for our families. We are forced to accept reduced hours of care due to staffing. These individuals are human beings. Every one of them deserves to receive the care to meet their needs. Most are not given this opportunity. Its unfair to the individuals, their families, staff that won't be able to survive on the pay even though they are willing to give the care to these individuals.