

Jessica Clark
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

My name is Jessica Clark and I am a caregiver for my seven year old daughter. Olivia is full care and is mobile. She needs assistance with all her needs and is nonverbal. I used to be a school teacher but haven't worked since 2016. Having a full time nurse is what every caregiver deserves as the cost of living continues to rise, nurses can't support their families. Taking care of someone 24/7 takes a toll on one's health, marriage, and mental health. I am sometimes too tired to shower or do anything for myself. My husband and I have grown apart because we live separate lives. I am taking care of Olivia and he has to work. I may never work again even though I loved teaching. I give everything I have to my child with special needs. Caregivers sacrifice everything to give their children the best life possible. It is a struggle to keep up with medical supplies, therapies, medicine refills, doctor appointments, waiver, case managers, IEP meetings, making meals; cleaning, and caring for our loved ones. Having a nurse is such a blessing because you can breath and spend some time with your spouse. Many special need families are stressed about finances, lack of intimacy, health struggles, and pure exhaustion. There are so many restrictions when a family is without a nurse. Please consider raising wages for nurses. They have such an important job and truly make the most positive impact for a family with a child with special needs. They are the backbone and provide support and stability through the daily struggles of life.