

Jessica Warnimont
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

I am Support manager at a provider agency. I started out part time 15 years ago as a DSP. Over the years I have seen it get harder every year to maintain staffing and management in this field. We do this because we care but it is hard to see Agencies and staff (managers included) struggle to stay afloat as the cost of living rises and the monies we receive is often not enough to pay competitive wages to staff and Management. I have worked every position in the field and still do. Our DSP's are stretched with supporting individuals and we work along side them often giving up our time with our Families to do so. We do not work a 9 to 5 Mon to Fri job and are on call 24/7.

DSP's supported our individuals around the clock for months at end when day program shut down during coved. No one asked what can we do to help. Day program staff got to stay home and got paid while our staff and managers worked day in and out to ensure everyone was taken care of. This is still the case as Day programs close due to staffing shortage and we are left to figure it out. We are then tasked with the emotional fallout when individuals routine is changed often resulting in yelling, crying and sometimes physically lashing out at staff. We then try to support both the individuals and the staff, letting them vent their frustrations and pain. Often DSP's make more than the managers due to any extra funding going to DSP's not the agency and is dictated on who funding is to be spent on. We need to increase funding as a whole.