

Karen Wojtala  
Testimony on HB 33  
Supporting the DD Workforce

Hello!

My son, Jon has developmental disabilities and related mental and physical health issues.

Prior to this crisis, he lived in an apartment with a roommate, and 24x7 direct support care, to live his most independent life possible. He is 43 years old. He was happy and proud of his apartment and independence .

Believe me, it had its challenges with constant turnover of staff, as well as, Staff that did not always put his best interest in consideration. I always take care of all medical and had home to visit every weekend. He's my joy!

Agencies, are struggling to hire and keep good staff. Koinonia, the agency that supported him, could no longer support him. We were forced into crisis. We ended up bringing him back home to live with us.

I am an aging parent and worry what will happen in the future. Constant caring for a loved one, without support can be challenging. It's hard just to find a DSP to get out for dinner or other outings.

President Biden stated in his address this January, that the people who provide this care are doing God's work. They should be paid as a professional and supported as such.

Please listen to these forgotten faces, and do what is right and moral. In our country, we emphasize inclusion! How can this happen without government funding?  
Please support the increase to fund this very important underserved community.