

Louis Antoneli  
Testimony on HB 33  
Supporting the DD Workforce

I was the guardian for my cousin, who has since passed away, who lived in at Rose-Mary Homes for 20+ years. She was non verbal and significantly disabled. Without their help our family would not know what to do. They took excellent care of her 24 hours a day and the DSP's were excellent. The DSP's are a special kind of person. They have difficult jobs as they need to be vigilant all the time so residents are well cared for and some of the residents have significant challenges. Feeding the residents, assuring they are safe, handling bathroom duties, bed time routines, taking them to day programs, grocery shopping, dressing them, all take a lot of energy and patience. It is a job very few people want to do however it is critical for the residents to have DSP's who are passionate about their jobs and really love caring for others. These folks make barely over minimum wage due to Medicaid reimbursement and the vast majority are the "working poor". We all know we need to care for those with disabilities, however we also need to care for the caregivers as well. I had such a respect for Rose Mary Homes I joined their board of directors and am now the Chair of the Board. We need to do something so that our DSP's are paid a living wage and can get beyond the poverty level so they can continue to care for others.