

Rebecca Bennett
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

I have been working with DD clients for over eight years. I have had numerous clients over the years, but have a special place in my heart for two of them. The first is Angel. She is wheelchair bound and non-verbal. She requires very special care. For the four years I worked in her house, there was a great deal of turnover in our staff. She rarely had consistent staff who were there long enough to get to know her or her needs. Staff would leave for higher paying jobs as soon as they possibly could. I witnessed her many times sitting in spoiled diapers for hours at a time, not being moved regularly so she developed bed sores, and being left alone for hours at a time because people didn't care. This was a temp job until they could find something better. If people were paid a higher wage, I believe they would invest more in their job and not be job hopping continually and beautiful people like Angel would receive quality care. The other young woman I came to love was Anna. My sister was her guardian and she became like family to us. The problem was we could not find staff for her because no one wanted to work for the pay they got. I ended up working 60+ hours a week just so we could provide staff for her. (She required 24/7 care.) We finally had to move her to a town 35 minutes away where they had a home that was already staffed. Because of the distance, I rarely see Anna any more and miss her desperately. Our DD community deserves better!