

**Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget  
House Health Committee**

Good morning, Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice-Chair De, Ranking Member Somani, and committee members.

Thank you for letting me speak to you today.

My name is Michelle Lang and I'm a Direct Support Professional (DSP). I work in Hamilton County and provide services like personal care, transportation and community integration.. I've been a DSP for 2 years.

Before the last budget's pay increase, DSPs were struggling. I love my job but was having a hard time paying my bills and was looking for another job to help. I was constantly stressed/

Since the pay increase, things have changed for the better. I'm stressing less and now have enough money to pay my bills without getting a second job, at least for now. This has made a real difference in my life and the lives of the people I support. Thank you for recognizing the importance of this work.

I'm concerned because the Governor's proposed budget doesn't include more money for DSPs working in waiver settings. Without action from you, we'll be right back where we started. We can't afford to lose more qualified, caring workers.

**I ask you to:**

- 1. Include a rate increase for DSPs in waiver settings.**
- 2. Create a system to regularly adjust pay so we don't face this crisis again.**

The people I support rely on me and other DSPs. We need to make sure this is a job people can afford to do, so we can continue providing quality care.

Thank you for your time.

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