



Chairwoman Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the subcommittee:

My name is Kathleen Binning. I am a proud, 14-year employee of Filling Home. I am a Direct Support Professional currently working in one of the group homes that Filling Homes services in Williams County, part of Representative Hoops' District.

We are able to provide a home for 8 residents when fully staffed. We assist our residents with meal prep, eating, laundry, showering, intimate personal care, physical therapy exercises, assisting with ambulation, transportation, home entertainment such as doing crafts, playing games, and attending community activities (when there is enough staff). These are just a few of our daily responsibilities when the residents are awake.

Though I am grateful to Governor DeWine for providing for our field in this budget, the hardship we face in our workforce will not, in my opinion, be enough for us to have a stable workforce. I am here to briefly share my experience as a Direct Support Professional and ask you to go a step further and provide more financial help.

I am old enough to retire and would like to travel to see my family, but due to the staffing crisis, I will not retire. I won't do that to my fellow Direct Support Professionals. I have helped train incoming staff only to have many leave in a few weeks/months for a better paying job. I have also seen staff that have been working for several years leave for higher paying jobs. I have been asked (we all have) over and over to fill in and to fill open time slots. I feel tired and overwhelmed, but continue to say yes, because I care about the residents whom I consider my family.

One of our residents, Terry, loves to go outside for walks and car rides, and he loves people. Each summer the community has a weekly cruise-in. Because Terry needs total assistance in the community, he is unable to go unless we are fully staffed in the house. Another resident, Crystal, is a very social lady. She loves to be with her friends and loves to talk. There is a monthly self-advocacy meeting, "Voices of the People", that Crystal enjoys attending. Because of the staffing crisis, she has been unable to attend—we have no extra staff in the house to transport her and no one to stay with her at the meetings. Often in the evening, I receive a phone call at home from Crystal. We will chat anywhere from 10 minutes to 30 minutes. I do this for several reasons: Crystal is like family—she needs the socialization, and I know that this provides an opportunity for the staff currently working to focus on the other residents.

Many of our residents struggle to walk long distances so when participating in community activities one-on-one assistance is required. Therefore, because of the staffing crisis, either some residents do not get to participate, or we don't go at all.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you. I appreciate that you will consider my request and that of my fellow Direct Support Professionals for the additional support. If you have any questions, I would be glad to answer them.



Rooted in faith, we support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, enriching lives full of value, hope, and choice within their community.