

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services.  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903  
State of Rhode Island General Assembly

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Re: Testimony in Opposition to Senate bill 2882 titled - QUALITY SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS ACT OF 2026

Dear Chairperson Murray and members of the Health and Human Services Committee

I am Susan J. Donovan from East Providence, Senate District # 14

I oppose Senate bill S2882, titled QUALITY SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS ACT OF 2026

I am the parent of a 31-year-old daughter who has been using Self-Directed services through BHDDH for approximately nine years. Our family has extensive lived experience navigating Rhode Island's developmental disability service system.

I am opposed to unionizing DSPs under S2882 for several key reasons:

1. **Unclear and Overbroad Language**

The bill's wording is confusing and shifts between Personal Care Assistance and all DSPs. As written, it appears to expand one part of the workforce by pulling staff from another, rather than strengthening the system as a whole.

2. **Workforce and Equity Concerns**

Unionizing only self-directed DSPs risks creating unfair pay and training disparities between self-directed and traditional providers, even though DSPs often perform similar work. This approach could undo progress Rhode Island has already made on DSP wages and training equity.

**Lack of Consumer Choice and Strategic Planning**

This proposal limits consumer choice and fails to take a comprehensive, strategic approach. Workforce challenges should be addressed by bringing all stakeholders together, not by advancing a solution that favors only one service delivery model.

As parents, my husband and I know that our daughter's needs will change as we age. When we are gone, she will likely rely on a blended service model that includes both traditional agency-based services and self-direction. Any policy changes made today will directly affect her future quality of life and access to supports.

If this bill is truly intended to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities live meaningful lives, it must support *all* service delivery models. I urge the committee to pause this legislation and bring together consumers, families, providers, DSPs, and state agencies to develop a fair, inclusive, and planful workforce strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective and for considering the long-term impact of this legislation on individuals with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Donovan

East Providence, RI

Senate DISTRICT 14