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Creative Trails- The Art Certificate Program

Good afternoon and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I would like to start by telling you that I have been a Direct Service Professional (DSP) for the past seven years. Working daily in the field with adults with intellectual differences has been one of the best experiences of my life. However, in the past seven years the rate of pay has not increased with the cost of living. I find myself now in a situation where, as a single mother, I can not support myself independently on my current salary. The cost of a modest, two bedroom apartment located in the town where I work, Biddeford, is, on average, \$1200 a month. I would have to work approximately 86 hours to cover the cost of rent alone. This is not a viable course of action. DSP's work hard and deserve to be compensated with a real living wage.

You might also like to know that in this current state of affairs, I could go work at most any fast food business and make a higher wage. My sixteen year old daughter just started a job at Target as a cashier and is making more per hour than I am. I went to college, I have several certifications, I have real skills and receive less compensation than a cashier. As a society we should place more value on the work it takes for us to care for our fellow man with the dignity and respect they deserve.