

KENDRA JOHNSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Fifth District



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

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DDDS Task Force
Direct Support Professionals Subcommittee Minutes
February 11th, 2020

Chair Kendra Johnson called the subcommittee meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Member present included: Susannah Eaton-Ryan, Cynthia Campbell, Lisa Elias, Gary Cassedy, Shane White, Teesie Bonk, and Micki Edelson.

Rep. K. Johnson welcomed the subcommittee members and asked each member to introduce themselves.

Rep. K. Johnson transitioned to a review of the January 24th 2019 DSP meeting minutes.

Members of the committee provided a few edits and a motion to accept the minutes with the provided changes was proposed by Cynthia Campbell and seconded by Micki Edelson.

Rep. K. Johnson provided the subcommittee with an update on the status of the provider stories.

Gary Cassedy asked what the subcommittee is hoping to achieve by obtaining provider stories. He referenced the recommendation guidelines provided by the Division of Research, noting that the stories will not be explicit recommendations to the DDDS Task Force or DDDS itself.

Lisa Elias noted that many members of the Delaware General Assembly have already heard similar stories through the Joint Finance Committee hearing process. She is concerned the addition of provider stories will not change legislators prospective.

Micki Edelson agreed that the facts should be at the forefront of the recommendation, but the stories can be used as supporting evidence.

Rep. K. Johnson emphasized the importance of using the recommendation structure the Delaware Division of Research provided to the Task Force.

Cynthia Campbell noted most individuals can only focus on three things at any given moment, because of this, she suggested the Subcommittee focus on no more than three recommendations.

The Subcommittee agreed to provide no more than three recommendations to the DDDS Task Force.

Gary Cassedy noted that DDDS falls under the Governor and therefore has little room to ask for more financial resources beyond the Joint Finance Hearing process.

Teesie Bonk mirrored Gary Cassedy, stating without the governors buy in, additional funding is unlikely.

Micki Edelson noted the subcommittee may want to highlight the importance of keeping DSPs in the state, not only because it is important work, but DSPs also stimulate the state's economy.

Cynthia Campbell said DDDS needs to present their financial needs during their Joint Finance hearing.

Rep. K. Johnson shared that she was told DDDS can not ask for additional money, however she agrees the division needs to accurately articulate their financial needs.

Gary Cassedy suggested the following recommendation: the State of Delaware must increase funding of the DDDS service system so that the acknowledged underfunding is eliminated. The underfunding is the root cause of the direct service manpower crisis current in the DDDS system.

The subcommittee was agreeable to the proposed recommendation.

Gary Cassedy noted that the professional in DSP is misleading.

Cynthia Campbell mentioned many people are using direct support personnel instead of direct support professional.

The subcommittee expressed they liked the term direct support personnel.

Gary Cassedy directed the subcommittees attention to the national conversation of raising minimum wage.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan asked if a bill passed in the Delaware legislature, would the state have to reimburse DSPs at the state minimum wage.

Gary Cassedy noted the state could except non-profits from the minimum wage requirements. Therefore, he suggested a second recommendation: the State of Delaware must ensure that every contract is adequately funded to support employee wages that are in keeping with the current minimum wage standards.

Rep. K. Johnson explained that if a minimum wage bill is passed in Delaware she would imagine it would require a phase in approach.

Gary Cassedy mentioned conducting an impact study of increasing the minimum wage would also be well advised.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan said she understands the importance of short and to the point recommendations, however she thinks the DSP stories should not be forgotten.

Rep. K. Johnson suggested the subcommittee submit the short recommendations and add the provider stories as supporting evidence.

Gary Cassedy noted the importance of infographics when working with legislators who want to digest information quickly.

The subcommittee agreed an infographic is a good idea to provide to the DDDS Task Force.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan emphasized the subcommittee has only discussed the day program side, however the subcommittee needs to include residential programs.

Rep. K. Johnson agreed, noting she will continue to reach out to providers.

Rep. K. Johnson asked the subcommittee to email any edits or additions to the two recommendations in preparation for the next subcommittee meeting.

Rep. K Johnson adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sophia Vassar

Public Comment:

N/A