

Written testimony for the Senate Finance Committee Thursday June 11th 2015

Submitted by Michael Rench Representing the Values and Faith Alliance

Chairman Oeslager, Vice Chair Coley, ranking member Skindell, members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Michael Rench and I am submitting written testimony representing the Values and Faith Alliance.

We are a group of 10 non-profit providers, all faith or value based, serving infants, children and adults with developmental disabilities in residential and day program settings throughout Ohio. We serve over 2400 individuals and employ over 2600 staff. We generate operating budgets totaling 136 million dollars; raising over 3 million in private dollar investments. Many of our member agencies have been in existence over 100 years. My organization, St. Joseph Home of Cincinnati, has been serving Ohio for 142 years. We join together to provide an additional voice to public policy discussions concerning those living with disabilities in Ohio.

We want to thank Governor Kasich and Director Martin for infusing new dollars into the DD system with their executive budget. We are requesting this committee restore the levels of appropriation as originally proposed for the Department of Developmental Disabilities by the Executive Budget. The new waivers, the 6% increase in the waiver rates and the 2% rate increase for ICFs are very much needed and appreciated. ICFs are important service options for families. We support families being given choices and information about living options, including ICFs. Our system needs additional dollars for people to have choices and to address the waiting list. These historic increases are long overdue and will allow more Ohioans with developmental disabilities to receive services.

We thank the Senate for leaving intact the agreement the four trade associations, OPRA, OHCA, OACB and VFA negotiated with Director Martin. The agreement allows the private ICFs (intermediate care facilities) to develop plans to convert or downsize larger settings without causing undue disruption to the lives of individuals served in those settings. We appreciate the Director's willingness to negotiate on these critical issues. We know this is best for the continuation of quality service to those in need.

I again want to thank the Members of the Senate Finance Committee for allowing me to represent the Values and Faith Alliance support of the DODD budget. And I am grateful for your support on these very important issues. Please feel to contact me if you have any questions regarding this testimony.

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