

HB 413

Proponent Testimony

House Aging and Long Term Care Committee

December 13, 2017

Good afternoon Chairman Arndt, Vice Chair Pelanda, Ranking Member Howse, and members of the House Aging and Long Term Care Committee.

My name is Jed Morison, and I am Superintendent of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Our board provides services to several thousand children and adults who have disabilities, and our employees are members of either the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System or the State Teachers Retirement System. I am testifying today in support of the current version of House Bill 413.

Earlier this year, all county boards of developmental disabilities in Ohio received notice that certain employees who are members of OPERS and who work throughout the school year would no longer be able to get a full year of retirement credit for their service—even if they spread their pay throughout the summer. This primarily affects teacher assistants and bus assistants who work in county board of DD schools and early childhood programs. This changes the practice that has been in place for more than 30 years, and it would negatively impact the retirement planning of many dedicated employees in Ohio's developmental disability support system.

If this change is not reversed, a new teacher assistant in one of our schools would need to work a total of 36 years to build up the equivalent of 30 full years of retirement benefits for a

teacher assistant in a public school district. That's 6 additional years of work for the same result!

In Franklin County alone, this change would impact more than 130 staff members, and the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities estimates that approximately 1,300 board employees across the state would be affected.

Fortunately, a remedy for this problematic change is included in HB 413. Once the bill is approved, employees of county boards of DD will be able to receive credit for a full year as long as their pay is spread out over the 2- or 3-month summer recess.

The language in the bill emerged from cooperative discussions with impacted parties, OPERS, and members of the Ohio General Assembly. We appreciate the support of OPERS with this bill and their recognition that our school employees should be treated the same as school staff in all other school districts in Ohio under the State Teachers Retirement System or the School Employees Retirement System.

We very much appreciate your consideration of this section of the bill so that hard working people at county boards of DD are not negatively impacted by this change. Passing the current version of HB 413 will ensure that our workers are on equal footing with other 9- and 10-month employees such as public school teachers and help them plan for the future.

Thank you for your time and attention today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.