



Miami Valley Fair Housing Center, Inc.

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Jim McCarthy, President/CEO

**Testimony for Centers for Independent Living
House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
March 13, 2017**

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and distinguished committee members, my name Jim McCarthy and I am the President/CEO of the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center in Dayton, Ohio. The Access Center for Independent Living in Dayton serves Montgomery, Clark, Preble, and Greene Counties, and is a reliable and important partner and resource to the Fair Housing Center.

I am writing to you today in support of the General Assembly of Ohio reinstating the Centers for Independent Living (CIL) line item (415520) for the Centers for Independent Living in the SF 2018-2019 Budget. The CILs used to receive GRF dollars directly. These funds were critical and opportunities for individuals with disabilities and the communities they live. The CILs need these state direct service funds to leverage additional federal opportunities to help individuals with disabilities to be independent. Some of these funds leverage as much as \$3.69 for every state dollar. Some funds could be leveraged at the even higher level of \$9 federal dollars for every \$1.00 spent. Please reinstate this line item and add \$1.7 million dollars to bring Ohio in line with other states in the region.

Centers for Independent Living play a crucial role in the lives of people with disabilities and work tirelessly to ensure that people with disabilities have a real choice in where and how they live, work, and participate in the community. Additionally, CILs are an excellent service and a bargain for Ohio, keeping people engaged with their communities and saving taxpayer money.

The Centers provide employment to people with disabilities for over half their staff. This gives the Centers the ability to provide a peer-to-peer level of support to the individuals we serve. This becomes a great resource for people with disabilities that need services from people whom best understand the disabilities and barriers that people face.

Centers also provide the highly cost effective service of transitioning individuals from institutions into the community. Each individual transitioned provides a major cost savings to the federally funded long-term care programs. By investing more money into CILs, we can provide additional cost savings to the state and therefore is a wise investment of public dollars. Promoting community based living is a main component of CILs, and we can advance this much further if the program was adequately funded.

Centers are working daily to increase the independence of individuals and to make our communities more inclusive and removing barriers. We appreciate your support in making Ohio a more inclusive state with your investment in the Centers for Independent Living.

Thank you for your careful consideration.