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Testimony of Pam Patula, Executive Director  
Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living (SOCIL)  
House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services  
March 13, 2017

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and distinguished committee members, my name is Pam Patula and I am the Executive Director of the Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living (SOCIL).

**SOCIL History:**

SOCIL was established locally in 2003 by individuals with disabilities. It is a non-profit consumer controlled organization (at least 51% of board and staff members have a disability) that provides an array of services to individuals of any age, with any disability residing in Fairfield and Hocking Counties.

**What we offer to your constituents:**

We offer a minimum of five core services:

- Information and referral;
- Independent living skills training;
- Individual and systems advocacy;
- Peer counseling;
- Community transition (from a nursing facility to the community and also for youth exiting secondary education)

Additional services are based on individual and community needs. We assist individuals with disabilities access resources and services such as accessible housing and transportation, employment, personal care assistance, socialization and recreation, public benefits, affordable health care and medical supports, home modifications and ramps, and diversion and prevention services to keep individuals from entering into an institutional living situation.

SOCIL has an extremely active Youth Transition group called **Abilities United** in Hocking County. Membership is over 30 high school students and young adults meeting monthly to learn new independent living skills and share experiences with each other. In addition, the **Adaptive Sports** program provides youth the opportunity to develop athletic skills in basketball and bocce both at the local and regional level.

**Independent Living is Fiscally Responsible:**

Many individuals served by us return to work, go back to school, obtain employment for the first time, secure affordable housing, participate in civic activities, and learn the skills necessary to lead independent and fulfilling lives in the community. Funding provided to Centers for Independent Living helps keep individuals out of nursing homes and institutions which are much more costly than assisting someone to live independently in a house or apartment.

Thank you for the opportunity to educate you on the services of Centers for Independent Living and the value they offer to your constituents.

Sincerely,

Pam Patula  
Executive Director