

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, my name is Bill Adams, I'm from Scioto County, and today I am representing Advocacy United. Advocacy United is a coalition of different advocacy groups across the state of Ohio, such as People First of Ohio, the Arc of Ohio, the Holmstead Act, to name just a few. I am here today to support the Ohio's Developmental Disabilities Department's budget for the Increasing Wages for Direct Care Staff. Which is so near and dear to me. I have been using Direct care attendants for the past 17 years, I began using them when I moved out of my parent's house, to live in a dormitory on campus of Shawnee State University back in the fall of 2000. I moved back home in the summer of 2004, but I kept my services. I wouldn't know what I would do without my attendant helping me, I know I had lost my mother in the summer of 2011, Dad is still in good health, but still, he is aging, which I don't want to think about, but all throughout of my life, I had depended on my parents, as most of you did. However having physical limitations, like I do, such as not being able to feed oneself, you have to rely on others for your everyday basic needs. I do support the 2% increase pay for Direct care staff, because they provide a critical need to the individuals that they serve, some on a daily basis. Without our providers, some of us, and I am including myself, would have to live in a direct care facility, such as a nursing home, or a residential facility, which I don't want to spend my life in a place of where I won't be happy. I'm 44 years old, I have hopefully another 40 more years to live out, and having a care attendant makes me as much as independent as I can be. Which leads me to the next thing that is on my list, and that is the supporting of the increasing of the waiver options, for the Ohio's Department of Developmental Disabilities budget for 2017. For without a waiver, there is no Direct Care Staff, well actually you could have attendant, but the individual would have to pay for it for themselves, but a waiver program usually pay for your staffing. With this new budget, there will be 13 hundred new waivers created this year, along with the 3000 last year, which I think that is outstanding. I know that from my own personal experience last year, I was fortunate to get on the I O waiver, starting in September, because due to new policies to the Ohio Homecare Waiver, of which what I had been on for years, I didn't meet their standards anymore. Luckily I had been on the waiting list for the I O waiver since 93, which it seems unreal that a waiting list is backed up for 23 years. I was very fortunate to transfer over with ease from one waiver to another without any disruption of my services, but I am positive that there are families within the state who doesn't have a waiver at all, and are desperately in need of one. I'm not an expert on waivers, but I'm pretty sure that some waivers does more than pays for staff, it also pays for moderate accommodations. For some examples, wheelchair ramps, a walk in shower, accommodations for lifts on vans. There will always be families in search of assistance, because one never knows when either an accident will occur in one's life, or a new family member will be born having some type of a disability, therefore Advocacy United is totally in favor for more waivers being created, for individuals and their families. I just want to thank you for your time for allowing me to explain to you why these two topics are so important to people who are receiving services, for without them, we would be struggling to make it through life, and again, I thank you for giving me your time.