



House Finance Committee  
Testimony on HB 166  
Bridget Gargan, Executive Director  
Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities  
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Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Bridget Gargan, and I serve as the executive director of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

Our association and the 88 county boards we represent are grateful for the attention the members of this chamber have given to providing adequate funding for critical supports for people with developmental disabilities in this budget. It is a testament to how much each of you cares for Ohio's most vulnerable citizens. However, there are still some points of concern with Substitute House Bill 166.

People with developmental disabilities must have every opportunity to live and work in their communities, and that requires reliable, safe transportation. Unfortunately, Ohio's current structure for funding DD transportation is fundamentally flawed. Recent studies have found roughly 64% of Ohioans with developmental disabilities state they have no access to the transportation they need under the current system. Continuing under our current transportation structure risks leaving these people behind.

This is why, for the past two years, a workgroup of stakeholders representing all facets of Ohio's DD service delivery system has worked diligently to craft a solution that allows people to more effectively use non-medical transportation (NMT) funds to go to work, attend classes, and otherwise be part of their communities. The proposal has the overwhelming support of Ohio's DD system and funding for the proposal was included in the as-introduced version of H.B. 166.

Regrettably, the substitute version of the bill includes a change that would prevent the implementation of this necessary update to the NMT rate structure until a new workgroup is formed to further study the issue and issue a report sometime in the next two years. This workgroup is needlessly duplicative and will delay badly needed updates to our transportation system for people with developmental disabilities.

In addition, this language also harms DD service providers across the state, many of whom are small businesses struggling to provide community-based and employment services. The language would delay much needed relief to providers that are currently required to provide community transportation with no means for reimbursement.

**OACB adamantly opposes this new language because of the consequences of perpetuating this flawed rate structure for people with developmental disabilities. We must not force people with developmental disabilities to wait for another workgroup's recommendations.**

OACB asks that you reconsider the creation of this workgroup, or—at a minimum—eliminate restrictions on the Department of Developmental Disabilities relative to the implementation of a new rate structure while this workgroup studies the issue further. Too many Ohioans with developmental disabilities are sitting at home waiting for a ride. Please do not leave them behind.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to share our concerns with this aspect of Substitute House Bill 166. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.