

Mark J. Romanchuk, Chair  
Thomas West, Ranking Member  
Members of the Sub-Committee  
Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

Hello. Subcommittee Chair, Romanchuk, Ranking Member West, and Members of the Subcommittee.  
Thank you for giving me time to speak to you today.

My name is Stephanie Barber Maynard. My diagnosis is Cerebral Palsy. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Counseling and a minor in psychology. I have worked in the disability community for more than 8 years. I am currently with Ohio Self-Determination Association as assistant Project Director.

I come before you with great concerns as it relates to the shortage of direct support professionals (DSP's) within the disability community.

I would like to take a moment to outline the role of a DSP in hope to shed some light as to why it is absolutely, essential for a line item increase in the budget for the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities that would allow for a wage increase for DSPs. Without the support of a DSP I would not be able to access my community, work or contribute back to society, let alone perform essential daily living tasks like brushing teeth, eating, drinking, bathing, and getting dressed. These are things most people take for granted. These are intimate tasks for someone be expected to perform with a new staff person every other day. It's the most degrading thing anyone will experience. It is very hard to deal with this daily.

Then to realize staffing is short and the field is experiencing a very high turnover. This not only adds stress to the system and providers, I am now faced with how to plan my activities based on who may or may not show up. Today this is an unnecessary stress that most people, fortunately, don't have to think about. It is astonishing that an employee at a fast food restaurant has the potential to make more money than a DSP. What that is saying essentially is that there is more value in making a cheeseburger than to help someone with their tasks of daily living when they cannot take care of themselves. This should not be the reality of any Ohioan with a developmental disability or within the United States of America, but unfortunately it is.

So I'm pleading with the committee to recognize the important work of DSPs across the State of Ohio so they may receive the wage increase they need and deserve so the system can resolve the staffing crisis that it finds itself in - To get back to what is important and why the system was developed in the first place, to provide quality care to folks with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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