



Partnering with people who have developmental disabilities to achieve healthy, fulfilling, enriched lives.

Testimony on HB 166
House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee

Dear Chairman Romanchuck, Ranking Member West, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on HB 166. My name is Julie Abiecunas and I am the Director of Koinonia Enterprises, which provides adult day, vocational habilitation, and employment services to over 300 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I wanted to express my support of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine, Director Davis for the Department of Developmental Disabilities, and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. **With these budget initiatives and rate increases, we will be able to improve the quality of services we provide to the individuals we are privileged to work with day to day.**

First, I want to show my support for the funding that is included for transportation in the budget submitted by Director Davis. One of our main initiatives in Koinonia Enterprises is to connect the individuals we serve at our day programs to their community around them, by making it a priority to be out and integrated into their community as much as possible. We own a fleet of vehicles that we use to access the community multiple times a day, hundreds of hours a month. The new proposed transportation rates and the ability to bill mileage for community integration will break down some of the financial barriers around transportation expenses. **These changes would give our individuals more access, and subsequently, better lives.**

Second, I want to share the need for updated rates for day program services for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities. While community integration is one of our top priorities, we also want to ensure we are providing strong, person-centered programming that is unique to each of the individuals we work with. The increase in rates of services would allow us more opportunities to be creative, innovative, and collaborative. **These changes would give our individuals higher quality programming, tailored to their individual wants and needs.**

Finally, I want to show my support for Director Miller's budget initiatives around increased rates for employment services. Current employment services rates historically have not often supported the cost of doing business, but we strongly believe individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities should be working in competitive, integrated employment settings. The proposed increased rates would positively affect every single service line we are reimbursed for. **These changes would give our individuals the support they need to find that perfect job fit in community-based employment.**

All the above proposed budget initiatives would greatly enhance the quality of the overall services we provide in Koinonia Enterprises, therefore increasing the quality of life for each of the individuals we work with.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share my thoughts with you on HB 166.

Respectfully,

Julie Abiecunas, Director of Koinonia Enterprises

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