



## FINANCE COMMITTEE

### WITNESS FORM

COMMITTEE DATE: May 28, 2019

NAME: William Ullman

ADDRESS: 161 E Main St Ravenna, Ohio

TELEPHONE: 330-296-2851

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING: Independence of Portage County, Inc

TESTIFYING ON BILL NUMBER: 166

TESTIMONY TYPE: WRITTEN

TESTIFYING AS: INTERESTED PARTY

**FOR BUDGET TESTIMONY ONLY:**

TESTIMONY TOPIC: HEALTH

TESTIFYING ON BUDGET ITEM(S): DODD Budget

DID YOU TESTIFY IN A SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE? NO

ARE YOU A REGISTERED LOBBYIST? NO

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

**- SUBMIT -**

Written testimony is a public record and may be posted on the Ohio Senate's website.



## Independence of Portage County

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Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
May 28, 2019

Chairperson Dolan and Esteemed Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am William Ullman and writing to provide testimony on behalf of Independence of Portage County, Inc. where I serve as the Executive Director. Independence provides services in Portage County for 150 individuals with disabilities. We have 6 ICF for a total of 43 beds. One of those we converted to serving school age youth. This was to bring families closer together. We assist individuals in their personal homes, provide day program services and in finding community employment. We have around 150 DSP's on staff and have around 50 open DSP positions.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Governor DeWine, Director Davis, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Ohio House of Representatives who, separately and collectively, have made an unprecedented investment in services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am appreciative of the administration and the Ohio House's proposal to invest in the homemaker/personal care service to help increase the average wage of DSPs providing that service. The increase proposed in the House budget will allow us to increase the wages for the person providing the direct care of the individuals. In our agency the DSP's are our most valued asset and to be able to provide them the significant increase the House budget is well deserved. While money does not solve all problems, I anticipate that we will be more competitive in the hiring market place. Hiring additional staff will not only allow us to continue to serve the individuals we currently serve, but we should be able to hire staff to add services for those individuals still on the waiting list.

The developmental disabilities services field is in agreement on the direction and actions to be taken to increase our support and positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their valued DSPs. On behalf of my agency, my staff, and the individuals we support, I encourage you, Senator Dolan and Members of this Committee, to support the proposed budget provisions relevant to the Department of Developmental Disabilities. Together we will succeed.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Ullman, Executive Director  
Independence of Portage County, Inc.