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Ohio Senate
Finance Committee
May 23, 2019

Chairperson Dolan and Esteemed Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Patricia Otter and I am writing to provide testimony on behalf of UCP of Greater Cleveland where I serve as President & CEO. Our 200 exceptional staff serve over 1300 children and adults with developmental disabilities every year. We offer a wide range of services (pediatric therapies, adult residential, adult vocational) to individuals with a wide range of disabilities, not only cerebral palsy. For several decades, we have been known as the agency to serve those with the most significant and complex physical disabilities.

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. **For just a moment, please place yourself in the shoes of an individual with a disability who is dependent upon one or more strangers to assist you with feeding, toileting, dressing, etc. Do you want the people supporting you to make a livable wage? Or shall we pay a non-livable wage so that you experience a 60% turnover of staff to have everchanging faces or, worse yet, no support at all?** As an agency committed to providing quality services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the investment helps ensure my agency can continue to provide our array of services.

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. **Your support will indicate that you share in our belief that Ohio's citizens with disabilities should be granted the same opportunities that all others are afforded and enjoy.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia S. Otter
President & CEO