

House Committee on Finance and Appropriations Health and Human Services Subcommittee

Testimony of
Carol Gee
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Chairman Sprague, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, my name is Carol Gee, mother of an individual with developmental disabilities. My daughter, Holly, receives services from a sheltered workshop in Seneca County.

Today, I want to talk to you about the impact of Employment First to my daughter's life. Holly has multiple disabilities that would prohibit her from working in the community. The current language of Employment First is that every individual with developmental disabilities can work in the community. I am here to testify that that is simply not true. Holly and many others have needs that require a structured environment that includes specialized chairs for positioning, special lifts, and changing tables typically not available in the community.

Staffing responsibilities require specialized training to enable staff to move my daughter in an appropriate way to not harm her. Holly requires staff trained to perform hand over hand supports. She needs repositioned every two hours due to her severe scoliosis; she also needs staff to assist with toileting. To provide greater community opportunities for Holly, we would need transportation to move the adaptive equipment required. Due to her fragile medical condition, Holly is prone to greater risk of illness when exposed to the community.

I ask that you consider my daughter's needs and the needs of others with disabilities when considering the proposal in the state budget. Furthermore, I request that you amend the proposed budget to define community employment so that my daughter's needs are addressed.

Specifically, amend section 5123.022 (D)

(d) A public entity shall administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities.

To add "As defined by the individual, guardian or the team"

This would allow me as guardian to select the best environment for my daughter to address her specific needs.

Please respect **My Choice** to keep my daughter in the workshop where she has been happily served for the last 11 years.

Thank You