



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Testimony
HB 64 – Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Senate Medicaid Committee
May 14, 2015

Chairman Burke and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, my name is Gary Tonks. I am the CEO of The Arc of Ohio. The Arc is Ohio's oldest and largest volunteer lead organization dedicated to improving the lives of Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Arc of Ohio and its members established most of the DD services supporting Ohioans with disabilities including everything from education and residential services to County Board s of Developmental Disabilities.

The DD System in Ohio currently serves approximately 100,000 children and adults; and, we estimate that over 100,000 Ohioans with varying disabilities are on their way with the explosion in diagnosis of children with autism and a much greater life expectancy.

The DD System has made significant advances over the decades in support of Ohioans with disabilities, but we still have over 42,000 people waiting for supports and too many people who would prefer to be served in less restrictive settings.

The Governor's original budget proposal would have provided the means to significantly address thousands of individuals and their families who have languished on waiting lists.

We were disappointed in the reductions to this historic initiative by the House and we urge you to support our families so desperately need:

- 1. Restore the state funded IO & SELF Waivers. We have over 42,000 Ohioans waiting for help!**
- 2. Restore the 6% rate increase for our direct support staff. The most critical staff in our system are making poverty wages.**

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3. Do Not make changes to the Bill of Rights for Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities. The current Bill of Rights was written by our members in an era when we had to be reminded that Ohioans with disabilities are first citizens of this great state, with the same inherent rights as anyone else. Do not degrade them with language that will once again reduce them to second class citizens.

4. Restore the 21% cut to Developmental Centers, which amounts to about \$40 million each year of the budget!

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am available for any questions you may have.

Gary Tonks
The Arc of Ohio