



Office of State Representative Stephanie Howse
House District II

Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 572
House Aging and Long Term Care Committee
May 16, 2018

Chairman Arndt, Vice Chair Pelanda and members of the House Aging and Long Term Care Committee, I would like to again thank you for hearing sponsor testimony for HB 572 from Rep. Scherer and I. Rep. Scherer has provided the context as to why Ohio's developmental disabilities support system staff members need our help in the General Assembly to give authority to the OPERS Board to provide parity in their retirement service credit system. I wanted to take a moment to bring awareness on the economic realities of the men and women whose lives we are affecting.

Nonteaching school employees already face low salaries: the national average pay rate for a teacher assistant is \$10.78/hour, while the average for a bus aide is \$10.45/hr. In Ohio, the average pay for a teaching assistant is \$9.81/hour (9% less than the national average) and for a bus aide is \$9.61/hour (8% less than the national average). To put it in perspective, these hourly rates range from merely \$19,620 to \$21,560 a year. The economic realities for the men and women serving in support roles for our county boards of Developmental Disabilities show that they need our help to preserve the pay they are currently receiving.

Without the ability to acquire service credit, these employees would face further economic hardships. Ignoring this situation would affect more than 1,300 employees across the state. Within a system that at times fails our workers and their financial wellness, this legislation serves as an opportunity to alleviate the difficulties of acquiring retirement benefits and securing an economically stable future.

Moving forward, I hope this committee considers the following question: how can we expect low wage workers to prepare for retirement, when their salaries are not enough to provide a decent livelihood for them and their families in the first place? It is vital to implement opportunities such as HB 572 for the sake of our workforce and all Ohioans.

Thank you, Chairman Arndt, members of the committee, and my joint sponsor Rep. Scherer for the opportunity to testify on HB 572. We would be happy to try and answer any questions