**Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee Testimony by Lynne Fogel**

**June 5 th , 2018**

Chairman Burke, Ranking member Tavares and other members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, my name is Lynne Fogel and I am the leader of CP Parent Columbus, a family resource group for individuals who have a loved one with Cerebral Palsy. I am writing to express my opposition to S.B 218, requiring Medicaid providers to obtain a surety bond at their own expense.

I have a 16-year-old daughter with Cerebral Palsy who requires assistance with all activities of daily living. As she nears adulthood, we are increasingly aware of the resources that are available and what will be required to allow her to live a meaningful and healthy life as a part of her community. Once she graduates from high school (and especially as we, her parents, age and can no longer physically help her), her safety and happiness will be largely dependent upon the care providers who will help her to work, volunteer and participate in community and recreational events.

Ohio is doing some innovative things to promote inclusion and independence for individuals with disabilities, but we need to take a hard look at how we can address the shortage of Direct Service Providers in support of those whose needs are the greatest, but who deserve to be a part of their communities like anyone else. Low pay rates, lack of continuing education opportunities and scarce access to benefits are already crucial barriers to filling all of the positions open in this field. Ohio's decreasing unemployment rate is overall a good thing, but is also negatively impacting the “fill rate” of jobs in this crucial area.

Independent providers in Ohio already are tasked with keeping all of their own records and are subject to more frequent and more rigorous auditing than agency providers, yet families across the state overwhelmingly prefer IP's to agency coverage to meet the needs of their loved ones with disabilities. Recent developments in the area of licensure requirements and the introduction of Electronic Visit Verification are driving providers away to other fields of work. This measure would be another nail in the coffin of our hopes to recruit adequate new workers to the DSP ranks.

Please consider these factors whenever you are faced with any proposed changes that would make it harder for someone to earn their living as a helper to persons with disabilities in our state! I urge you not to support this measure.