

Finance Subcommittee on Health, Human Services and Medicaid

Christine Brown

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Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member West, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Christine Brown and I work at the OSU Wexner Medical Center – Nisonger Center, as a clinical research assistant. I, as well as many others with a disability, want to work with those with no disability in jobs that are part of the community. I want to show that I am contributing, like other citizens – paying taxes and giving back.

Transportation is important to me because I rely on transportation to get to my job and other places in the community. People with disabilities like myself cannot drive and need assistance getting around. I also go to the mall, bank, grocery store and many more places in the community. I would not be able to do it without transportation. Right now, nonmedical transportation budgets are designed to take you from your house to a day program or your house to work, but the services are not designed to get you to jobs in the evening. I know people that have two jobs and my friend can't find transportation to her second job. If we don't get this nonmedical transportation fixed now, there will be a lot of people that could be stuck at home and not be able to work and pay into taxes. The proposal as introduced in HB 166 would fix this transportation problem. In addition, the Federal Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services requires that their funds are used to support community-based services and jobs.

When the budget was new, I was excited about changes in transportation for people like my friend Marci and others who want to go to work or dinner or the store. But it changed and now they are creating a new committee, even though a committee already studied this for two years. They put a person on the committee who is from a county of no more than 65,000 people and has square mileage between 550-650 miles, but they did not include a person with a developmental disability, like me, who depends on transportation for everywhere I go. Does that make sense to you? Please don't let this happen. Please go with the original plan.

Thank you