



Muskingum Residential, Inc.

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Working Towards a Brighter Future

May 24, 2019

Ohio Senate
Finance Committee

Chairperson Dolan and Esteemed Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Jerri Elson and I am writing to provide testimony on behalf of Muskingum Residential, Inc., where I serve as the Executive Director. Our agency is a small provider, having served and supported individuals with IDD in Muskingum County since 1979. We provide residential services, along with transportation, among other supports. Many of our individuals have been with us for 10, 20, and even more than 30 years.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Governor DeWine, Director Davis, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and the Ohio House of Representatives who, separately and collectively, have made an unprecedented investment in services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am appreciative of the administration and the Ohio House's proposal to invest in the homemaker/personal care service to help increase the average wage of DSPs providing that service.

An increase in wages for DSPs will have a significant impact for our staff and ultimately for the people we support. Many of our DSPs are eligible for public assistance, due to low wages. Other, caring staff members have had to make the choice to leave the field, as they can often make a higher wage working in the fast food industry than they can providing support and services for individuals with IDD. Consistency is crucial to the individuals we support, but cannot be provided with the level of staff turnover seen currently. As an agency committed to providing the best services possible to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, this investment will help ensure our agency can continue to provide services and supports at the level our individuals not only expect, but deserve.

The developmental disabilities services field is in agreement on the direction and actions to be taken to increase our support and positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their valued DSPs. On behalf of my agency, our staff, and the individuals we support, I encourage you, Senator Dolan and Members of this Committee, to support the proposed budget provisions relevant to the Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerri L. Elson
Executive Director