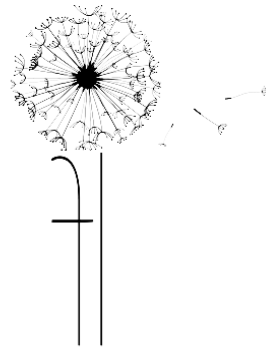


COMMUNITY, LIFE & INNOVATION

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Testimony on HB 110

House Finance Committee

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and Esteemed Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to offer this testimony on Ohio's operating budget!

My name is John Schwartz and I am the CEO of CLI Incorporated. CLI is a non-profit 501(c)3 that operates in Huron, Erie & Ottawa Counties, providing supports for approximately 70 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (DD). CLI directly employs 11 full-time and 6 part-time staff. Additionally, CLI owns a subsidiary, Firelands Local LLC, which employs 3 full-time and upwards of 20 part-time employees. Many of Firelands Local LLC's employees are also Ohioans with DD.

I support the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine, Director Davis for the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). With these budget initiatives and the leadership of Director Davis and Director Miller, Ohioans with developmental and intellectual disabilities will continue to receive the vital services that organizations like mine provide.

CLI's mission is to increase the earnings, status & quality of life of people with developmental disabilities. CLI, as directed by Ohio's mandates to prioritize employment first and also community integration has strategic goals related to large community development objectives. Since 2015, CLI has invested more than \$750,000 of capital in community revitalization projects in downtown Norwalk, Ohio. CLI has also invested in our employees, paying significantly more than similar companies. These investments were risky because the reimbursement amounts are insufficient. With funding actually designed to achieve the level of staffing necessary to help people find and keep jobs and also integrate in their communities, CLI would immediately reinvest even more revenues back into our community and employees who provide direct services to people with developmental disabilities.

To best support these services and the Ohioans who receive and provide them, I encourage you to support the addition of the following initiatives into Ohio's biennium budget:

- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to fund much needed Homemaker and Personal Care, Day and Vocational Services and Nonmedical Transportation Medicaid home and community based waiver services rate increase. *These increases will provide much needed funds for Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, support for other front-line professionals and sustain the infrastructure necessary to provide our services.*
- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to support the reimbursement formula for intermediate care facilities (ICF).
- Support a budget amendment that would allow ICFs to choose between a reimbursement rate freeze or a continuation of the formula for the first year of the biennium.
- Support the creation of a Task Force to address our system's workforce challenges. *This Task Force will identify several initiatives and projects designed to help providers recruit and retain a qualified workforce.*
- Support the as introduced budget for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them!

Thank you again, for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you. Please let me know if I can be of further help to you or this committee.

Regards,

John Schwartz, CEO
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