



INDEPENDENCE

OF PORTAGE COUNTY

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Testimony on HB 110 House Finance Committee

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

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Sophia Buckson-Murphy and I am the Program Coordinator of Independence of Portage County, Inc. We are located in Ravenna Ohio and serve Portage County. We are a not for profit business that provides supports for 100+ Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ 200.

I am very supportive of 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, Ohioans with developmental and intellectual disabilities will continue to receive the vital services that organizations like mine provide.

Our services are required for those who are unable to care for themselves. Our individuals often need multiple staff on shift 24/7. They need support to do the most basic of tasks. Things that any typical person might never consider being unable to do. We have people who need full assistance to clean themselves, to eat, to take meds, to stand up, to blow their noses. We also have those who only need assistance with tasks such as attending appointments, money management, med management. Without proper funding, individuals in our community will struggle to complete the most basic of daily living activities. We struggle to provide staffing to support these individuals. Additional investments would ensure that we do not have discontinued services for individuals because we do not have the staffing. If we can provide an adequate wage, the turnover rate for our field may significantly decrease.

To best support these services and the Ohioans who receive and provide them, I encourage you to add 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 and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.**

Sophia Buckson-Murphy
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WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 3/9/2021

Name: Sophia Buckson-Murphy

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Independence of Portage County

Position/Title: Program Coordinator

Address: 575 E. Lake St.

City: Ravenna State: OH Zip: 44266

Best Contact Telephone: 330-839-5436 Email: Sbuckson.murphy@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB110

Specific Issue: Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Budget

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 3 Minutes or less.

Please provide a brief statement on your position: I write the programs that our individuals use to help them become more independent. I supervise a team of four Residential Supervisors.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.