



Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc.

Testimony on HB 110 House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee

Chairman Roemer, Ranking Member West, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is James W. Steele and I am the Executive Director of Ohio Valley Residential Services Inc. and we are located in Hamilton County. We are a not-for-profit business that provides supports for 150 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ 225 employees.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine, Director Davis for the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). 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.

Ohio Valley Residential Services, Inc. has experienced a work force shortage over the past five years and it is directly related to wage. Although the increase in waiver funding from the last budget certainly helped with increasing wages for our Direct Support Professionals, we continue to compete with fast food wages. We also support the much-needed regulatory reform that can be brought about by the establishment of a Work Force Task Force.

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.*

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.

James W. Steele, MSW

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