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March 1, 2021

**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 Brian Thomas and I am the President/CEO of United Disability Services, located in Akron, Ohio. We are a non-profit Ohio corporation that provides supports for hundreds of Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We employ 130 staff.

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 and Director Miller, Ohioans with developmental and intellectual disabilities will continue to receive the vital services that organizations like mine provide.

Our mission is to provide and support inclusive, life-enriching options through person-centered programs and advocacy. We offer a diverse array of programs, the most essential “core” services being adult day programs and transportation. Approximately 350 adults attend our day programs.

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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian W. Thomas".

Brian W. Thomas

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