



INDEPENDENCE

OF PORTAGE COUNTY

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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 Melanie Maniaci and I am the P.E.A.C.E. Activities Specialist of Independence of Portage County. We are located in Ravenna Ohio where we serve one county. We are a not for profit business that provides supports for 92 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ 175 staff members.

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.

We provide services to a wide range of individuals, and for all of our individuals we provide every service that is applicable for them; from housing (for ICF and HPC), to nursing services, day programming, to community integration and even community employment. We take our individuals out for community activities, work on motor skills, teach them daily living skills, the list goes on and on. Our staff are the bones for our house. Our staff strive each day to do what is best for our individuals. They stay with us, not only on the good days, but help each other on the bad days. Additional investments or collaboration could help us show our staff their true worth, they are out there taking care of people's lives.

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

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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.**

Melanie Maniaci
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WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 3/1/2021

Name: Melanie Maniaci

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Independence of Portage County Inc.

Position/Title: Day Services

Address: 575 East Main Street

City: Ravenna State: OH Zip: 44266

Best Contact Telephone: 3302962851 Email: mmaniaci@iopci.org

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? Written Testimony Only

Please provide a brief statement on your position: Our staff strive each day to do what is best for our individuals, to ensure their health and safety, to ensure their needs are being meet, to be their eyes and ears if needed. They are invaluable to the services we provided.

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.