

Dear Chairperson Schmidt, Vice-Chairperson Miller, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the Family and Aging Committee,

As a proponent of Lauren's Law, I'd like to share an *extremely* truncated timeline of events in Ryan's life that resulted in over 70 reported allegations of neglect and abuse, known as "Major Unusual Events" or MUIs, that allegedly occurred during October 2022 - January 2023. Although I supplied substantiating evidence, our county of residence took until July 11, 2024 to inform my family that none of the MUI allegations were substantiated. As a note, this investigative employee is charged with investigating the agency who writes his paycheck; he is a direct employee of the same agency responsible for the allegations of abuse and neglect that I, and others, personally witnessed.

At the conclusion of this testimony I have included one message log from Ryan's communication device. Several statements are highlighted with notes to provide context. These are the messages Ryan told my cousin and I when we visited him at the county owned Respite Home. He, and others, were residing in abhorrent conditions. I still cannot read the transcript of Ryan begging to come home with me, begging for clothes as his were all "lost," and sharing that he was nervous repeatedly, without becoming emotional. If you are able, please try to imagine if this was your own child, sibling, or elderly parent, begging to be treated with the most basic humane conditions.

Facts regarding cameras/technology:

1. Ohio is a "Technology First" state; **ORC: 5123-2-01 Technology First**. In short, Ohio DD Boards are required to consider technology as a means of addressing care "to the greatest extent possible." As technology is always considered first, cameras would not supplant hands on "care."
2. When my dog goes to daycare, I can view her real-time, anytime, via a mobile app. ***Should my dog really have more safeguards than my adult brother?***
3. Allowing cameras does not place an additional financial burden on anyone aside from the family.
4. I am on camera approximately 50-60% of my day at my job; cameras not only protect clients, but also employees in the event of an allegation of poor treatment.

If cameras had been allowed in his County Developmental Disabilities Board Owned Home, I would not be here today. We would have known immediately how Ryan was treated, and we would have the tools to ensure that wherever Ryan lived next, we would be able to ensure he was safe. We also would have had irrefutable "proof" to substantiate the alleged abuse/neglect that I witnessed; as multiple eye witness testimonies were dismissed by the Assistant Director of DODD, Lyndsay Nash, when I raised my concerns to her level.

Ms. Nash informed myself and the Executive Director of the Autism Society of Akron with guidance to the effect of 'take up your concerns with the General Assembly' and she was not interested in reviewing any of my information. Per Ms. Nash's advice, I am here today to implore you to:

- 1) allow **families to place cameras in all dwellings where individuals with disabilities reside** (examples: group homes, respite homes, emergency respite homes) and
- 2) to include a change from "internal DD board investigations" to **external investigations by an unaffiliated third party**. Accurate and quality investigation outcomes are critical so poor conduct can be handled appropriately.

To quote Governor DeWine, this aids in creating a family friendly state and helping **all** Ohioans to achieve their "God given potentials."

With the deepest appreciation of your time,
Lauren Bregar Hagenbuch
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Sunday, December 18th, 2022

PAG +1 new
 PAG +6 eat
 PAG +1 open
 PAG +1 new 1
 PAG +2 shirt
 PAG +7 hang out
 PAG +3 go
 PAG +3 all done 2
 PAG +1 want
 DEL +1 DISPLAY
 PAG +1 play
 PAG +1 water activities
 DEL +2 DISPLAY
 PAG +16 CHAT
 PAG +1 I feel nervous
 PAG +16 relax
 PAG +2 something is different but I am safe
 and okay
 PAG +14 relax 3
 PAG +2 I need space
 PAG +0 yes
 PAG +3 I
 PAG +14 am
 DEL +31 WORD
 DEL +0 WORD
 DEL +0 WORD
 DEL +3 WORD
 DEL +0 WORD
 DEL +1 DISPLAY
 PAG +10 happy
 PAG +5 I
 PAG +1 am
 PAG +3 happy
 PAG +15 to
 DEL +0 WORD
 PAG +0 too
 PAG +5 I
 PAG +1 love 4
 PAG +1 you
 PAG +14 CHAT
 PAG +8 I feel nervous
 PAG +3 relax
 PAG +2 I want to be in my room
 PAG +2 relax
 PAG +6 I want to be in my room
 PAG +6 go
 PAG +2 all done 5
 PAG +8 on

PAG +30 all done
 PAG +7 go
 PAG +0 all done
 PAG +0 all done

Background

- This information is logged directly from the communication device that Ryan uses as his “voice” as he is nonverbal.
- Ryan had to be placed in an emergency respite home that is owned by Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Cuyahoga DD); this is directly because there were not any DSP staff to help him stay in his own home.
- Cuyahoga DD owned Respite Home Staff removed his communication device from him many times.
- On my 12/18/22 visit I had to retrieve his communication device and give it to him.
- All of these statements are what Ryan communicated to me when I visited him in the home, and gave him back his communication device.
- **Communication is a human right. It is indefensible to remove someone’s ability to talk.**
- This document highlights just a few items to explain in detail what Ryan had to say about his lack of ability to be in his own home, his own community, and with his own friends.

1	Ryan was requesting new clothing. All of his clothing was taken from him. His closet was empty as was his chest of drawers. The Cuyahoga DD Respite home never found his clothing. I have no idea how long he was without clean clothing. The conditions were deplorable.
2	Ryan was saying “go” and “all done” and gesturing while using body proximity to indicate he wanted to leave and come home with me.
3 5	Ryan continued to express his stress and anxiety and requesting to leave the respite home, requesting to go to his home, and requesting to be all done with the respite home.
4	Expressing affection for me (family).



My daughters Baptism 6/26/22
Pictured from left to right: Ryan (my daughter's Godfather), myself, my husband, my daughter, and my sister-in-law (Godmother)