



110 Foss Way
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**Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget
House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee**

Chairwoman Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and esteemed committee members,

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

My name is Brooke Rush and I am an Employment Specialist at RT Industries, and we are located in Troy Ohio, I have served in three counties Miami, Shelby, and Auglaize county. We are an organization that provides Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services funded by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) for upwards to fifty (50) school aged students through aging adults monthly of Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our entire organization employs just over one-hundred (100) people. Approximately ten (10) of these employees provide VR services through OOD.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, including job coaches, threatens our ability to achieve our mission of helping people with disabilities find great jobs in their communities. These budget initiatives, and the leadership of Director Miller, will support us to recruit and retain the staff needed to continue to provide vital employment services to Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities. Attached is an example of the great work RT Industries' employment staff accomplished this year through services and funding from OOD.

RT Industries primary focus is helping people with disabilities gain and maintain employment in competitive integrated employment. Our organization supports school-aged students with Pre-ETS and Summer Youth services. With adults, our supports range from Community-Based Assessments (CBAs) to on-the-job support such as Job Coaching.

RT Industries is a wonderful employer but has struggled to stay fully staffed. This has made it very difficult as an employment specialist because our case loads got very overwhelming. With little reimbursement or help from RT Industries while maintaining a larger caseload. Employment specialist got behind on reports, could have had better performance with our individuals and some have struggled financially at home. I have been one to struggle with how much we make and the increase of living.

We encourage the General Assembly to approve the Governor's budget proposal for OOD.

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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.**

Brooke Rush
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Hi, I am Brooke Rush I work for RT Industries and I have had many successful closures with Ohioans with Disabilities. One that really stuck out to me is an Individual I started Pre-Employment Transition Services with. He was a junior in highschool. He did several pre-ets services before coming a senior. The last few months of senior year we started focusing on employment after highschool. Their very first interview was with Lowes hiring event online. As an Employment Specialist I met them at their highschool to help get set up on zoom. They were hired at Lowes and started in June after graduation. This individual had a successful run with Lowes for two years before deciding to reenter OOD services to try to find a Monday -Friday job. After a few months of job development, we were able to have an interview with Jayna INC. Jayna has hired several OOD applicants from RT Industries. Jayna was very high on his list and he was determined to be employed by Jayna. He was offered his second job on January 4th, 2023. He has enjoyed being in the workforce.

Attached are a few individuals I have worked with.



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