



110 Foss Way
Troy, OH 45373
937-335-5784
www.rtindustries.org

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 the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Stefanie Sowry and I am the Community Engagement and Operations Manager of RT Industries, and we are located in Troy Ohio, serving Miami, Shelby, Darke, Auglaize & Montgomery Counties. We are an organization that provides day, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of thirty (30) Direct Support Professionals are proud to provide essential services to over one hundred fifty (150) Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities each month.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD. The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, including direct support professionals (DSP), threatens our ability to provide the critical supports on which the people we serve and their families rely.

Due to the low level of funding for the services and work we are providing it has become arduous to find staff. The people we serve have missed out on experiences that help enrich their lives due to not having the staffing for their level of supports. When I started with this organization over 10 years ago, there were hardly ever open positions. It was a job that people started at and never left until it was time to retire or they had a major life change, due to it being so rewarding and the bonds that are made. Now it has been years since being fully staffed and to not be hiring. With the level of pay due to funding, employees have to leave no matter how much they love their job and position because it is not a livable wage. We deserve more pay!

Our services provide enriching opportunities for the people we serve that they would not be able to receive if it wasn't for RT. We serve many people who have complex medical and behavioral needs and without our support they would not be able to work, play, and thrive in the community like they can when attending our program. We work on independence skills, relationship building, life skills, and various other things to support people with developmental disabilities. We also support people with various personal care tasks such as medication supports that include g-tube feedings and oxygen support, supports to use the restroom and to totally assist in lifting and changing the person. These supports are necessary to give each person we serve. Some people we serve still live with their families and by having our program their family members are able to continue working, many of them being essential employees, and entrust that their loved ones are supported and cared for in a loving and safe environment.

It is imperative that there is a budget increase for our services to continue to offer these supports and for employees to be able to support themselves and their families

Helping people achieve personal success by developing skills to confidently work, interact and thrive in the community.

~ Safety ~ Collaboration ~ Camaraderie ~ Growth ~ Integrity ~ Excellence ~ Innovation ~

