

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 Steve King and I am the Executive Director of Anne Grady Services, and we are located in Holland, Ohio and we serve primarily Lucas County. We are an organization that provides intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or residential, day, transportation, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 340 employees are proud to provide essential services to over 200 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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.

The labor market has changed significantly over the past several years and the pay rates we are able to offer to our direct care staff are falling short. The labor market has moved very quickly recently and it is more difficult than ever to hire and retain employees. We often lose employees to Amazon, gig employment, fast food or retail businesses locally.

Due to the struggle to find adequate staffing, we have had to consolidate homes thereby limiting personal space for our clients and reducing access to community events and activities. We have had to pause vital community supports that families rely on such as respite services for adults and children, and limit our day service and transportation options to the community.

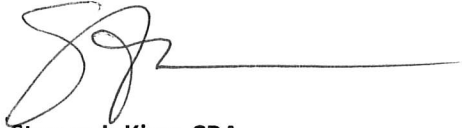
The caregivers who our vulnerable clients rely on day in and day out struggle to support their families in times of rising inflation often pushing them to pursue employment in other industries. Employees who have a heart for the individuals we serve are the backbone of our community and incredibly valuable.

The Governor's proposed budget initiatives, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck, is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Anne Grady Services. **We encourage this subcommittee to approve the Governor's budget proposal for DODD and to invest additional dollars into these vital services to raise direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64. This investment will help us recruit and retain the workforce needed to continue to provide our quality services.**



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 black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'SK' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

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