



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

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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 Rebecca Garrison, and I am the Employment Services Coordinator 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 our the people we serve and their families rely.

I have staff complain to me weekly about having to start looking for other employment opportunities because they just can't afford to stay at RT. It has proven difficult to find any new employees with any experience, every applicant puts a higher wage than what we can offer on their applications.

Employment Services helps people get where they want to be and become financially independent. Inclusion into the workforce and being a part of something is crucial for good mental health. Imagine not being able to work or make money to support your family. We are here to teach these skills, advocate for their rights and support them in their employment so they can have successful meaningful lives.

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 RT Industries **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.**

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

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

