

**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 Quiana Tolliver and I am the Human Resource Director of Koinonia Homes. We are an organization that provides whole person, community based, care to IDD individuals administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 500 plus employees are proud to provide essential services to Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

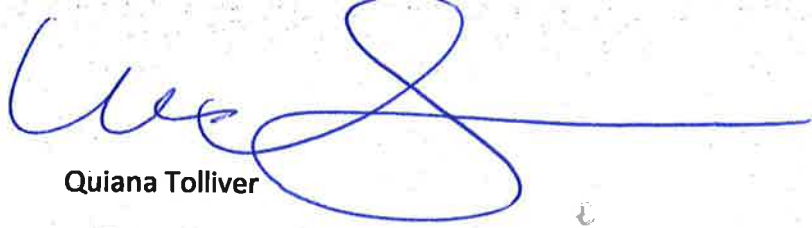
I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD. The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, including direct support professionals (DSP), threatens our ability to provide the critical support on which the people we serve and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

We truly need the proper funding to be able to recruit and retain Direct Support Professionals. We continue to face challenges with retaining and recruiting due to low wages. Direct Support Professionals who support people with developmental disabilities can't feed their families with what they are paid, and they are quitting the field every day at an alarming rate. Efforts to retain current support professionals and attract new ones to the field are greatly impacted by low wages caused by current reimbursement rates. Ohio's Developmental Disabilities workforce crisis is different from other workforce shortages. Developmental disability providers are locked into reimbursement rates set by the State of Ohio. Only action by state officials can resolve this issue. With the increase in reimbursement we will be able to pay the Direct Support Professionals a higher wage that will allow them to properly provide for their families.

If we pay Direct Service Professionals proper wages, they will be able to provide for their families without the use of public assistance programs, because they will make a wage above the poverty level.

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 Koinonia Homes. 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Quiana Tolliver', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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