



May 23, 2023

**Testimony on HB 33
Senate Finance Committee**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and esteemed committee members,

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

My name is James Steffey and I am the CEO of Envision, and we are located in Cincinnati Ohio and provide services in Hamilton, Clermont, Warren and Butler counties. We are an organization that provides Homemaker/Personal Care, Non-medical Transportation, Adult Day Services, and Shared Living administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 170 employees are proud to provide essential services to over 600 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine. 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. The House-passed version of HB 33 is an excellent foundation to help our system combat these many changes.

Turnover last year at Envision was over 40%. We currently have 22 open direct support professional positions. It seems like every week we lose another good, caring DSP from the field as they take jobs for higher pay in other industries (retail, fast food, warehouse, etc....). Because Envision's reimbursement is tied to Medicaid waiver rates, we have not been able to increase what we charge for services to meet the demand for higher wages like many businesses. We are also having a difficult time filling open positions as our starting wage, while average for our industry, is often well below the starting wage of jobs available in the marketplace. New people are not entering the field at a rate fast enough to keep pace with those who are leaving.

Because of the labor shortage, Envision is having to turn away new referrals for services – services that are critical to meeting the health and safety needs of the person with a disability. Without service providers the burden of care falls to family members. As a mother of a child we serve said to me this week, "My greatest fear in life is that I will outlive my child". No parent should have to hope to outlive their child because they fear that



adequate care isn't available. It's time we take steps to ensure that people with disabilities have access to appropriate care and services.

The budget initiatives for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck will reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Envision. **We encourage this committee to further invest additional funds on top of the House-passed budget for DODD.**

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 today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Steffey".

James Steffey, CEO

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