

# NORTH SHORE SERVICES

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## 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 Scott Poffenberger and I am the Director of North Shore Residential Services, Inc., and we are located in Cuyahoga County. We are an organization that operates group homes for individuals with intellectual disabilities via the Home & Community Based Waiver administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of thirty six employees are proud to provide essential services to forty seven 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 and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). 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 House-passed version of HB 33 is an excellent foundation to help our system combat these many changes.

We have been providing services since 1985, and never have we been in a position where we may have to consolidate services by closing one or more of our group homes. Staff are leaving to work at other higher paying jobs such as at Amazon, telemarketing and even some fast food restaurants. Some tell us they can stay home and collect enough government dollars to live without working at all. We are constantly advertising and interviewing applicants, but are unable to find folks willing to take a job with us, citing low pay, and the effort needed to assure care for the individuals we serve. Allowing us sufficient funding to attract and keep good staff is in the financial interest of The State of Ohio. If I close a house, where do the residents go? Likely to a State institution where costs are significantly higher and the individuals will be removed from their communities, disrupting their lives.

The budget initiatives for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck and Miller, will reinforce and rebuild the services provided by North Shore. We encourage this committee to further invest additional funds on top of the House-passed budget for DODD and maintain funding for OOD at the House-passed levels.

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.

