

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 provide this written testimony.

My name is Anna Eimer, LPN and I am the Waiver Services Nurse of Koinonia Homes, and we are located in Independence, Ohio. We are an organization that provides assistance with all aspects of daily living and health care coordination to over 100 Ohioans living in their homes throughout our community in Cuyahoga and Summit counties through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of hundreds of employees are proud to provide essential services to over 100 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and very appreciative of the additional investments adopted by the House of Representatives in House Bill 33.

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 everyday. The budget proposed in HB 33 is a good foundation to help our system combat these many changes.

Nursing coordination of care and nursing resources for on-going staff training are only two of the immensely important roles that nurses play in supporting the best lives of our waiver receiving individuals. Nursing for Waiver programs for adults with IDD is not funded in an understandable, realistic fashion – so much so, that most providers choose not to even attempt to get waiver nursing reimbursement because of how complicated it is. Due to the on-going staffing crisis and the levels of staff turnover, assistance with coordination of care for the individuals by a nurse is more important than ever. More funding is needed to hire competent DSPs and nurses at living wages to continue caring for our individuals with complex medical needs as they continue to age in place in their homes in our community.

House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Koinonia Homes. We encourage this committee to support the House's version of H.B. 33 as it pertains to DODD appropriations. Further, we encourage the Senate 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 today.

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