

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 written testimony today.

My name is Andrew Schultz, I am the Admissions Coordinator for Koinonia. We are an organization serving hundreds of individuals in multiple counties across Northeastern Ohio. We provide various programs from employment services to adult day services to intermediate care facilities and waiver congregate settings.

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).

Over the years, I have worked as a direct support professional, a job coach, a house supervisor, and a schedule coordinator. I am now responsible for admissions into all programs our agency offers. It has been a challenge to meet staffing needs for many of our programs. We have seen interested parties in our line of work, turn down job offers due to a low wage. One cannot blame perspective direct support professionals who find better wages at less stressful and less demanding jobs, while Koinonia and other agencies are unable to pay competitive wages. The hardship of low hiring rates and low retention falls on families and individuals in the community who are unable to receive needed services in their homes, and in the community. We want to offer a competitive wage to our direct care professionals, and in doing so we can better serve the community and the IDD community at large.

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 Koinonia. 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.

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