



*Serving critical needs, one person at a time*

**HB 33 Interested Party Testimony  
Kristen Henry, Executive Director  
Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc.  
Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
Chairman Matt Dolan  
June 8, 2023**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Kristen Henry, and I am the Executive Director of Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc. (APSI). I am here today to provide interested party testimony on HB 33. APSI is a not-for-profit organization which **provides guardianship, advocacy, and protective services** according to Ohio law and by the authority of Ohio Probate Courts for adults 18 years of age and older who have a developmental disability. **APSI specializes in serving individuals with the highest level of needs in the least restrictive manner possible.**

APSI requests that the Senate restore the funding proposed by the DeWine Administration and Director Hauck, and maintained in the House-passed version of HB 33 for GRF 320412 Protective Services line item under the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). For 40 years, APSI has partnered with DODD to provide protective services for thousands of adults with developmental disabilities who are unable to make their own decisions and do not have a family member or other advocate to provide this support. This funding is critically important to ensure that these vulnerable individuals can receive the care and services they need to meet their daily needs and have the high quality of life they deserve.

*The funds in the Executive and House-passed version of HB 33 would address longstanding workforce needs that have forced APSI to maintain a waitlist for services for over 10 years, with over 140 individuals currently unable to receive the services they need.* While APSI prioritizes the most urgent needs in accepting new clients, individuals on APSI's waitlist may be waiting for medical or dental care, or may not have an advocate monitoring their care and quality of life.

This funding would also support competitive wages for the recruitment and retention of staff, which will lead to lower caseloads and higher quality services. Most staff positions at APSI require a college degree or significant professional experience per our contract with DODD, yet our current funding only supports an average hourly wage of about \$20/hour for these positions. Without competitive wages we will continue to have high caseloads per employee which also contributes to high turnover.

This funding level will bring APSI's guardianship services in line with other similar services in Ohio which currently spend 50-100% more per person on these vitally important services. By contrast, the FY23 GRF allocation for Protective Services is below the GRF allocation from 15 years ago in

FY08. The funding increase in the As Introduced and House-passed versions of HB 33 was intended to correct the underfunding of these critically important services over the past decade and to ensure the needs of vulnerable adults with developmental disabilities would not go unmet because they are waiting for a guardian to advocate for them.

For these reasons, APSI respectfully requests the Senate restore the funding for GRF 320412 Protective Services to help ensure we can eliminate our wait list and serve individuals with developmental disabilities in need of guardianship services.

Chairman Dolan and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify as an interested party on HB 33. I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.