

Pastor Rae Sunshine Lee

Chair Steven Huffman, Vice Chair Terry Johnson and Ranking Member Nickie J Antonio

Interested Party HB 33 May 11th 2023

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 33. My name is Pastor Rae Sunshine Lee I'm on the passport waiver through Ohio Department of Aging. The last three years my husband has been my soul provider due to the pandemic Emergency rules Appendix K.

Living in a rural community and dealing with the care crisis as it exists, it's really hard to find workers. Really impossible to recruit anyone with a low wage and I have my husband as my provider so I'm asking the legislators to go beyond the pandemic rules and make it a permanent rule to allow to spouses to become providers permanently for persons with disabilities. To add to this, we must allow this rule to go forth permanently, because it will cause the assurance of the marriage covenant. No one should be forced to divorce their spouse to get care. As the regular legislation stands, that's always been the status quo, but we need to do better by our Ohio families and do the right thing; allow spouses to become paid providers long-term.

From my personal research, I have found that 35 states already had this in place before the pandemic; Ohio was not one of them.

One in eight direct support workers are in poverty. The wages that are paid to providers are extremely low and need to be increased with the cost of living. No one should be forced to add jobs to the jobs they currently have because they cannot make it enough with their main job and have to pick up a second just to make ends meet.

Home care workers in Ohio do many tasks for people. It is their independence, and that independence is important. According to the 1999 Supreme Court Decision, under the American Disabilities Act, Olmstead gives PWDs, persons with disabilities, the right to live at home in the community, with state-funded support. In my personal circumstance, my husband has to work a separate job, aside from taking care of me, because the wage is so low. I am visually impaired, (legally blind), and have physical conditions that affect my mobility.

An investment of \$25 an hour should be the top of line priority. Based on the available budgets, and the current cost of living expectations and increases, I am certain that the requested funds could be allocated within the current budgetary allowances and constraints. In addition to that, Ohio Legislators need an oversight committee for the state agencies known as, Ohio Medicaid, Aging, and Developmental Disabilities, to make sure providers are paid timely, without all the red tape.