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*"We Stand on Service"*

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**Testimony on HB 33: The SFY 24/25 Operating Budget  
Senate Health Committee**

**Chairman Huffman Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and esteemed committee members,**

**I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.**

**My name is Tonya Reed, and I am the Executive Director of RTC Industries, Inc., and we are located in Bellefontaine, OH and serve five counties. We are an organization that provides Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services funded by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) for 43 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our entire organization employs 94 staff. Approximately five of these employees provide VR services through OOD.**

**I am here to express my gratitude and support for the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and OOD Director Miller and the House for their support of OOD's budget in HB33.** The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, including job coaches, threatens our ability to achieve our mission of helping people with disabilities find great jobs in their communities. These budget initiatives, and the leadership of Director Miller, will support us to recruit and retain the staff needed to continue to provide vital employment services to Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities. RTC has been providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services funded by the state for over 30 years. We specialize in working with Ohioans who have the most significant disabilities. Our most recent Provider Scorecard shows RTC's percentage of successful closures at 62.14. This is well above the state average of 54.22%.

RTC provides a variety of services through OOD. We offer all the necessary services to help individuals with disabilities explore job options, find a job that is a good match, and provide the level of support necessary for the individual to learn the job and be successful. We also offer services for high school students including a summer work program.

Over the past few years, RTC has struggled to find and retain staff to provide these services. Staff who provide these services must be able to have very flexible schedules, especially job coaches. Job coaches' work schedules are dictated by the job schedule of the individual receiving services. This means coaches must be available in the evenings and weekends. Many times, they work split shift schedules. Due to our current reimbursement rates, we can only afford to start job coaches at \$14.00 per hour. Unfortunately, we are losing employees to higher paying jobs in our area with more predictable schedules. We have been advertising for a job coach (part time and full time) position on and off for the past year and have not found a suitable candidate. As a result, we have had to turn referrals for services requesting community-based assessments and job coaching.

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***Mission Statement: Providing services to promote employment, community connections, and independence in life.***

*RTC does not discriminate in provision of services or employment due to disability, race, color, creed, national origin, gender, or age.*

*RTC Industries is a tax exempt 501c3 organization*

*Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities*

**We encourage the Senate to approve the OOD budget initiatives in HB33.**

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 and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.**

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