Autumn Ridler
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

I am a former Intervention Specialist who left due to my students never being able to obtain the services needed because the funds always had to assist the sports teams or the general school population. I then a DSP in December of 2020. I have always had an affinity to working with and helping those with disabilities, my current employment is an absolute fulfilling job mentally and emotionally however the financial department is severely lacking. Ohio's current minimum wage is $10.10 per hour and even with having 18 years of experience working with the DD population in some capacity I currently make just $4.34 per hour more than that. With the current rental housing market and rising cost of utilities, my paycheck barely covers the basics and that doesn't include the gas in take to travel to and from work. We supplement our food by going to multiple food banks monthly. Shortly I may be forced to purchase private insurance because even though I work 40 hours a week my employer doesn't offer medical insurance. When that time comes, we will most likely be going without any healthcare because the cost of co-pays and deductibles are not affordable on my current salary and the monthly premium payment would be better spent on bills that keep a roof over our head, the lights on and food on the table than pay for something that really would not be financially beneficial. Being without any medical care is not ideal due to health issues I have that require expensive testing every few years as well as I take daily medications I must take. Unfortunately, without a wage increase that makes it possible to pay my bills, especially with the current increase in inflation, and either the ability to afford medical care that won't leave me with massive debt in co-pays and deductibles or full Medicaid for all. I may have to be forced to leave the field I love; the field I went to college for to obtain employment that will pay me a wage I can live on with medical benefits.