

Christi Friley
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

I am a Medicaid caseworker in Delaware County. I process and approve home health waiver applications for our residents. Delaware has a high volume of waiver cases as families move here specifically to gain our unique resources.

I keep in close contact with most of my clients. Many of them have family members who advocate for them, but many of them have no one but JFS & the county board of DD to turn to for help. I've lost count of how many clients I've had call me in the last year to report that they can't get much-needed services. These are Ohio residents with varying degrees of disabilities, often very severe. They've gone through the arduous process of applying for a waiver, even being wait-listed, only to find there are no providers available in their area or to have appointments constantly cancelled or rescheduled. Clients who can't dress themselves, bathe, prepare meals, tie their shoes, wash dishes, do laundry, drive to the store, remember to take vital medicines, and who have no other human interaction than that with their caregivers are suffering due to the shortage of available providers. What good is there in approving these waivers if there's no one to provide these needed services?

Our hands are tied and we're put in the position of only being able to offer empathy with no solution. It's agonizing. Ohio residents with disabilities deserve consistent quality care and they're not receiving it. We should be addressing every barrier they have when it comes to their daily needs and we're failing them.