

David Pamer  
Testimony on HB 33  
Supporting the DD Workforce

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dave Pamer and I am the Secretary, sit on the Executive Committee and am a responsible board member at UCP of Greater Cleveland, a private provider of services for persons with developmental and other disabilities in Ohio.

UCP is unable to pay critical direct care workers' living wages due to stagnant reimbursement rates from DODD (rates set in 2007, with one 4% increase in 2022). This causes acute labor shortages (an 80% turnover rate for DSPs in 2022) and impacts quality of care. The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, especially direct support professionals (DSP), threaten UCP's ability to provide the critical supports on which the people we serve and their families rely.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD. The Governor's proposed budget for DODD is a great foundation to stabilize, reinforce and rebuild the services provided by UCP of Greater Cleveland. I encourage the legislature to approve the Governor's budget proposal for DODD and to invest additional dollars into these vital services to raise direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64 (vs. a current average of about \$13/hour), just like the current wages of DSPs working for state-operated developmental centers.

Unlike other businesses, we cannot raise our prices to support increased wages for our team members. Only the legislature can make this long-overdue investment that will help us recruit and retain the workforce needed to continue to provide our vital, high quality services for persons with developmental disabilities. Without this investment, provider agencies will not be able to remain in business to provide these services.

I am so appreciative of your support, and we will be watching closely as we look for your support.

Sincerely,

David Pamer  
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