Elisabeth Landers
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

In the 1960's when my mother was advised to make her disabled infant son a ward of the state she and my father refused.They brought my brother Bill O'Sullivan home and fought for the rights those with Down Syndrome did not have. My parents and other citizens started CAR,now known as ARC.They helped to create a county board adressing issues and needs of those with disabilities and worked to create group homes in Ohio. When they passed they asked their nine children to stick together and support each other. I am Bill's guardian but I don't do it alone. My husband Bill, brothers Marty and Jerry, daughter Liz, the rest of my siblings and the wonderful staff at Albion House care for "Billy O". We work to ensure he keeps the quality of life my parents fought for. We have watched county workshops close and miss the strong relationships with the staff of Parma ATC. We have understood the need for different types of programming and have supported the new company Via Quest.

Today however,our silence has become untenable.The lack of staffing has become critical. Are ratios being met? Staff is working alone often for hours at a time,services once promised are gone with only basic needs of clients being met. This is not the quality of life my parents and so many envisioned when they made it their mission to speak for those who could not speak for themselves.I am asking that you make it your mission to protect the most innocent and vulnerable of our population. Increase wages so that workers make at least as much as those who cook hamburgers,give them the dignity of being able to provide for their families and work reasonable hours that allow them to fully care for clients and their own loved ones. Provide time and adequate compensation for training.Reward those who have been working non stop since critical staffing shortages began. Finally, remember your mission,protect and honor the people we love and have entrusted to you.

Elisabeth O'Sullivan Landers