

Jeanne Anciaux
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

I am writing in response to the shortage of skilled Direct Support Professionals who work with citizens with DD in the state of Ohio. My name is Jeanne Anciaux and I have a brother who has been a client in several group homes in Ohio for the past 30 years. My sisters and I count our blessings every day for the time, kindness, and love that these professionals show towards him. Both of my parents have passed away during the past several years, and the professionals at my brother's home have been there for him, understanding his emotions. My sisters and I show our appreciation daily, but thankful gestures cannot pay the bills. These professionals LOVE what they do and want to KEEP doing it! However, at such low wages, it is simply impossible. Being a school teacher for 31 years, I understand how low wages and low budgets impact the quality of personnel available for hire. There is not a shortage of loving, qualified people to hire as Direct Support Professionals, but there is a shortage of loving, qualified people to hire as Direct Support Professionals when being offered extremely low wages. This crisis affects the person with DD, their families, and the current professionals who are working. Many group homes are short-staffed, which puts clients' and professionals' safety at high risk. Many clients have special medical needs as well as fits of aggression. To keep everyone safe, there needs to be a high professional/client ratio. I am asking that you find the money to support and sustain the budget for wages for these Support Professionals. Citizens with DD deserve to be taken care of with dignity in the state of Ohio. Please dig deep into your hearts and understand that there are citizens of Ohio willing to work with special people with developmental disabilities. Let's show them we appreciate them by keeping them employed! Let's make Ohio be known as the state that cares and loves ALL of their citizens!