

Karen Matt
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

My husband, our adult son who had autism, and I recently relocated to the Columbus area. I immediately began looking for a quality adult day program for my son. Three months later I am still looking and am told it could be several more months before he can begin attending a program that is suited to him. The primary reason I am given for long waiting lists is the inability for the programs to find and retain quality support staff. In the meantime my son is bored, his obsessive-compulsive rituals are becoming more pronounced, and he is losing some of the social and behavioral skills he developed while attending his previous program. I am with my son 24/7 and I know the amount of patience, understanding, stamina, and skill it takes to care for him and I'm his mother. Whatever the support staff is paid cannot possibly be enough for the devotion and effort it takes to care for this special population. Please consider improving their wages. We need to attract and retain devoted and caring staff members to care for these vulnerable individuals. The need is now!