

Kathleen Gress
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

My name is Kathleen Gress and my brother John lives in a group home in Medina, Ohio. John grew up with three loving and supportive sisters and amazing parents who did whatever it took to meet John's needs. As our parents aged and John got older he moved into the group home. I don't know what our family would do without this amazing group home and its staff. Over the years the staff has gone above and beyond to address John's social, emotional and educational needs, while being a caring, supportive friend to him. As a retired teacher myself, I know how challenging teaching people of all ages is, especially those with developmental disabilities. People who work and support those with developmental disabilities are leaving this field because they cannot support themselves on the meager pay they are compensated for the crucial jobs they do. It is imperative Ohio lawmakers increase the wages of those working with those who have developmental disabilities. Please seriously consider my plea for their wage increase. Without a competent staff for those with developmental disabilities at schools and group homes, our family members and friends are left in dire situations when they don't have to be.

Thank you,
Kathleen Gress
Peachtree City, GA