

Melissa Duckworth
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

I am a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant who has dedicated my entire career 45 years to the DD population in Columbus and the surrounding cities. I have never seen the need for qualified help as great as it is right now. A DSP job is so much more than a 9 to 5 job where you clock in and out and leave the job behind you as you spend time with your family. It is a 24/7 commitment to the care and well being of another human being who cannot take care of themselves through absolutely no fault of their own. Yet these patient, caring caregivers are paid less than any other worker in Ohio . A lot of these caregivers work two full hours to buy 2 dozen eggs for their children - just eggs not including the bacon, bread, and milk to finish out one meal of the day. How can anyone expect that these caring folks can afford to survive on such low wages?

As I plan on my retirement and what my next goals will be, it saddens me to think that I can no longer watch what is happening to our DD population in Ohio. with not enough caretakers to provide for their basic needs. Please, as lawmakers, consider stepping away from those desks where the money is plentiful and try spending a day caring for the DD population knowing you may not have enough money to pay for your ever increasing rent or food for your children. It will be the most humbling experience you could ever have- I promise!.