

Scott Poffenberger
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

My name is Scott Poffenberger. Since 1985, I've been the Director of North Shore Residential Services in Berea, Ohio. We serve 45 individuals in State licensed group homes and shared living (foster) homes across Cuyahoga County.

During this time, I have seen the slow deterioration of the D.D. system due to a failure to adequate funding and the workforce crisis. In a meeting with Cuyahoga County Providers many years ago, then DODD Director told us that IDD was "a political loser".

The consequences of this reality are staring us in the face now as we providers face the real possibility of needing to shut facilities and consolidate our services due to lack of staff. This morning I received a resignation notice from a 10 year staff member taking a \$20 an hour job. We pay \$14.75.

If we shut one of our facilities, where will our Individuals go? As the system crumbles from the bottom up, the State will need to assume their care.

Please support an increase in funding for the DD system so that I can pay competitive wages. The failure to do so will result in chaos and huge monetary costs to the State. Please invest in us.

Thank you.