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## Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget Senate Medicaid Committee

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Camie Hawkins, and I am the Administrative Assistant of RT Industries, located in Troy Ohio, serving Miami, Shelby, Darke, Auglaize & Montgomery Counties presently. We are an organization that provides day and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of thirty (30) Direct Support Professionals (DSP) are proud to provide essential services to over one hundred fifty (150) Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities each month. I support the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and appreciate the additional investments adopted by the House of Representatives in House Bill 33.

As a new employee to this industry the importance of these services has been eye opening. It has been catastrophic to hear of the struggles employees face daily to provide for their own family. Some employees are working two jobs to support their families. As I hear this, I realize the passion and love they have for RT Industries and the care they provide for persons served. It is impeccable. As a previous supervisor of a local gym, our janitors' start wage is \$15.00 hourly. That is more pay for less responsibilities. DSPS employees deserve higher pay for the impact they have on others. DSPS play a significant and crucial role to provide stability to others' lives in this community.

I have had the privilege of meeting and speaking with DSPS employees, and a variety of person served. In a fleeting time, I was impacted emotionally by their stories and duties. The difference RT Industries employees are making in this community now and for the future of Ohio is remarkable. The needs and essential care that DSPS provides to persons served and their families is influential. It provides peace of mind and stability in their lives knowing their loved ones will be ok. People with developmental disabilities will thrive in their community for years to come all because DSPS like my friend Heather at RT Industries Working full time as a DSP making lower income and having to work two jobs to support her family. Is unacceptable! Why doesn't she just quit and go work at McDonalds making more money for fewer hours and less responsibilities. She knows just as well as everyone here at RT and the Miami valley community that if she does not do it, Who will? The bottom line is we have essential employees here who will do what no one else will and yet their pay does not align with their experience. I agree that more pay needs to be approved. This will allow RT to provide this crucial and urgent support for people with developmental disabilities to "thrive not survive but thrive."

*Helping people achieve personal success by developing skills  
to confidently work, interact and thrive in the community.*

*~ Safety ~ Collaboration ~ Camaraderie ~ Growth ~ Integrity ~ Excellence ~ Innovation ~*



**House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by RT Industries. We encourage this committee to support the House's version of H.B. 33 as it pertains to DODD appropriations. Further, we encourage the Senate to invest additional dollars into these vital services to raise direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64. This investment will help us recruit and retain the workforce needed to continue to provide our quality services.**

**With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them! Thank you again for the chance and privilege to bring my concerns before you, and if I can ever help in this process, please tell me.**



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