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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 Chandra Thompson, and I am the Community Engagement and Operations Director of RT Industries, and we are located in Troy, Ohio serving Miami, Shelby, Darke, Auglaize & Montgomery Counties presently. RT Industries 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 am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and very appreciative of the additional investments adopted by the House of Representatives in House Bill 33.

Funding is the top barrier for providing employment services to people with disabilities. Increased funding is an absolute necessity for employee retention. With the current reimbursement rates, our Employment Specialists are providing employment support in businesses that offer a higher rate of pay than we can pay our employees.

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 opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.**

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

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

