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May 2, 2023

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram,  
and esteemed committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today.

I currently work for Koinonia Homes, a nonprofit organization that provides whole-person, community-based, care to IDD individuals. Koinonia has a wide-reaching presence throughout northeast Ohio. We operate over 60 homes throughout the region, allowing the individuals we serve to continue to reside in and be contributing members of the communities they know as home. The model of care Koinonia uses is utilized throughout the state of Ohio. It is a more sustainable and economical alternative to other methods of long-term care, and it has allowed IDD Ohioans to live longer and healthier lives.

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.

I have worked for Koinonia for over five years. Throughout my time here, I have worked closely with our programs team, which has allowed me to see the challenges facing our industry firsthand. The commitment and dedication the staff here have for the individuals we serve are second to none. People who work in this field have a true passion for the work they do. However, too often we in this industry have been asked to do more with less. IDD funding, specifically the Medicaid reimbursements we receive for providing services, has not risen at a sustainable rate. Please help us provide these valuable people with wages they can live on.

Today Koinonia faces an unprecedented staff shortage.

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 an average of \$20. This investment will help us recruit and retain the workforce needed to continue to provide our quality services.

I, along with the staff and individuals at Koinonia truly appreciate your efforts and thank you for your consideration in keeping us in mind in your decision process as you move forward. Thank you for fighting the good fight and staying the course!

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn M. Dudra

**“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation  
is not to utter words but to live by them.”**

**– John F. Kennedy, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1963**

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