

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

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

My name is Tiffany Wenz, LPN I am a nurse currently employed with Koinonia Homes serving adults with IDD. 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.

Being a nurse at Koinonia homes I see the direct impact on my clients due to the wages our current DSPs (Direct Support Professionals) are paid and the lack of staffing we have because of this. I encourage you to support the level of funding for IDD that Governor DeWine proposed in his budget, and urge you to invest additional dollars so we can raise our DSP wage to an average of \$20 an hour. We need this to ensure our clients are receiving the best care possible. Our clients deserve the basics such as going on outings and to workshop. Due to lack in staffing, outings have been reduced and medical appointments have even been missed. Frontline staff are essential in the everyday care of our clients and their basic needs.

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.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and thank you for the opportunity to bring my concerns before you today.

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