

Testimony HB 33 – Senate Medicaid Committee

Mark Seifarth – May 4, 2023

Chair Romanchuk, Ranking Member Ingram, Members of the Senate Medicaid Committee thank you for the opportunity to give public testimony on HB 33, focusing on the Dept. of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), and related issues.

As a brief introduction, I began in the Statehouse 40 years ago as an LSC Fellow, also serving as an Ohio Senate staffer, Legislative Liaison for two state agencies, Vice Chair for then Rehab. Services Commission, Chair Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, and two stints as Congressional Liaison for the independent federal agency the National Council on Disability in Washington, DC – and I am a person with a Developmental Disability.

First, I come before you to thank Governor DeWine and the House for their work to bring Developmental Disabilities Direct Support Professionals to \$18 per hour and ask if revenue estimates allow it, bring that wage to \$20.

Second, I request retaining language to ensure that a person with a Developmental Disability is appointed to each County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Governor DeWine introduced this historic focus in HB 33 to be certain that people with disabilities have a voice in how they live their own lives. Already I believe, 22 counties have appointed a person with a disability, so we know it is time for all counties to inclusively move forward.

As we don't want to replace any current County Board of DD members, perhaps we could have this begin in one, two, or three years to give some time for County Board of DD appointments.

There will be a great deal of statewide and local support to find qualified persons with developmental disabilities to serve on County Boards of DD. Support and assistance in finding qualified candidates will come from many organizations across Ohio with direct

involvement, including the Depts. of DODD and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Ohio Association of County Boards of DD, Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council and 12 local Councils on Independent Living around Ohio, Ohio Self Determination Association, People First of Ohio, Ohio Advocacy Task Force, Ohio Olmstead Task Force, University Centers for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities at OSU Nisonger Center and University of Cincinnati, and Supported Decision-Making Network of Ohio to name a few.

Also, it is my understanding that there are already dollars being allocated to help train persons with DD to serve as Members of County Boards of DD.

There are many good policy and funding initiative for Ohioans with disabilities in this two-year budget – including Full State Match for the almost 80% federal funds for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities for education and training for Ohioans with Disabilities to get and keep good jobs.

Let us support this seminal moment in Ohio's history as Governor DeWine's budget moves us forward.

People with Developmental Disabilities all across Ohio can serve on County Boards of DD and are ready to have a voice in their own lives and futures.

Thank You