

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, and members of the Ohio Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding House Bill 33. I am Ms. Wheelchair Ohio 2023, Allison Boot. I am here to speak to you about the importance of home and community-based services.

As a woman with a significant disability, home and community-based services are vital to my life. Without access to home and community-based services and the caregivers who support those services, I would not be able to complete basic activities of daily living like bathing, dressing, toileting, and transferring to my wheelchair to participate in our community much less advocate for myself and others with disabilities. I moved to Illinois in 2015 to be with my now husband, who lived there at the time. We decided to move back to Ohio two years ago after losing many of our aides due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition from one state to another was very difficult. Despite being an Ohio native, I did not really feel like a member of the community for the first few months that we were back because I could not get on Medicaid or access home and community-based services. Given the fact that my husband and I are such strong advocates we were able to get help from our county within three months. For most people with disabilities, it takes much longer to qualify for Medicaid let alone get onto a home and community-based services waiver. Even with help from our county, it takes a considerable amount of our own financial resources to maintain the care we need. People with disabilities can offer the state of Ohio unique perspectives and skillsets. Given that, the state of Ohio should do [everything possible] to entice people with disabilities from other states to move here by offering a streamlined process and additional funding for our home and community-based services.

In 2009, the U.S. signed on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability to ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for people like me. According to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, as of today, the U.S. is 1 of 185 countries to have signed on. Supporting home and community-based services is a way to make sure that Ohioans with disabilities are free to enjoy all our state has to offer.

Part of my Ms. Wheelchair Ohio platform is to encourage youth with disabilities to dream big and live their lives to the fullest. Being able to advocate by giving you this testimony is a big dream for me which would not be possible if not for the home and community-based services I receive. In closing, I urge you to please

support funding for home and community-based services so that other people with disabilities can also dream big and live life to the fullest. Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

Allison Boet

Ms. Wheelchair Ohio 2023/ Author of the *Tales of Dance Series, The Magic Within*

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Pronouns : she/her/hers

"People with disabilities can do whatever able-bodied people can do. They just have to do it a little differently," Derrick Denison, Royal Prince of Mooncrest.