



CARROLL HILLS INDUSTRIES, INC.

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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 send this written testify before you today.

My name is Edgar J. Barnett Jr. and I am the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Carroll Hills Industries, Inc., located in Carroll County Ohio. Carroll Hills Industries, Inc. provides Adult Day Services, Vocational Habilitation, Community Employment, and Transportation services to adults with Developmental Disabilities through the home and community based Ohio Medicaid Waiver program administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 10 employees are proud to provide essential services to over 35 and growing Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities who reside in Carroll County.

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.

Some of the struggles facing a small agency such as Carroll Hills Industries are as follows:

- Carroll Hills Industries, Inc. is competing against other agencies that are also trying to staff their program such as ours having to pay a competitive rate to get and keep staffing.
- Competing against other employers that are paying higher hourly wages than we are able to pay our Direct Support Professional creating a staffing shortage. Due to this funding, Carroll Hills Industries pay Direct Support Professional from \$10.60 to \$12.00 per hour. Our local McDonalds agency here in Carroll County is paying their staff a starting wage of \$14.00 per hour, offering sign on bonuses, 401K retirement plans, making it impossible for to compete. In Carrollton the local deli is paying \$15 per hour, and at a local restaurant bus boys receive higher wages than our Direct Support Staff Professional staff. These types of jobs require significantly less skill and little to no training.
- To qualify as a Direct Support Professional it takes hours/days of specialized training to even be able to serve individuals with Developmental Disabilities due to special needs such assistance with Adult Daily Living services (Ambulating, Feeding, Toileting, etc.), Insulin Injections, Oxygen, and services for the visually impaired.

The Importance of serving our population and their families is that Carroll Hills Industries gives individuals with Developmental Disabilities a purpose and meaning to come to a an Adult Day and Vocational Habilitation center to learn basic living skills and work skills everyday to earn a paycheck.

Carroll Hills Industries provide services that keep our individuals that have no place to go off the streets or staying at home all day. Carroll Hills Industries provide our clients a sense of belonging among others with developmental disabilities, their peers, their community and not being judged or possibly harassed.

The low waiver reimbursement rate we receive for providing much needed and critical care services creates a struggle for agencies such as Carroll Hills Industries to find staff, because of the low wages that makes it difficult for a single person household to survive on.

House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Carroll Hills 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.



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