



Executive Offices and Foundation
7996 Darrow Road, Suite 10
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087

Community Services
1402 Boettler Road, Suite B
Green/Uniontown, Ohio 44685

Vocational Services
1672 Norton Road
Stow, Ohio 44224

Center for Children with Disabilities
9772 Diagonal Road
Mantua, Ohio 44255

(330) 274-2272
(800) 233-8611

www.hattielarlham.org

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Jennifer Sleeper, and I am the Vice President of Residential Supports at Hattie Larlham. We provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities in numerous counties across Ohio. Hattie Larlham provides - intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities, supported living services, licensed waiver homes, preschool, shared living, transportation, day, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of 850 employees are proud to provide essential services to 1600 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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 in this field for over 20 years, and I have never seen providers struggle as much as they are today to find staff to work with Ohioans with intellectual disabilities. We provide many needed services in the community, and we are unable to pay our staff wages that are comparable to the local fast-food establishments. The staff we do have typically have to work many hours of overtime to meet the needs of the individuals we serve. They are sacrificing their free time to ensure we are keeping people safe.

I receive multiple calls per week from family members who are at their breaking point and have nowhere to turn. They are aging parents who are no longer able to care for their adult child with intellectual disabilities and they are asking me for help. Unfortunately, I have to turn them away because I do not have the staff to provide them the help that they need. I receive calls from siblings whose parents have recently passed, and they are now charged with taking care of their sibling with intellectual disabilities and they do not know where to turn. Again, I must turn them away because we cannot employ a sufficient workforce to meet the demand. Its truly heartbreaking to know that if we could pay a higher wage, we could employ enough staff to provide help to all of those who are asking.

House Bill 33 as passed by the House is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Hattie Larlham. We encourage this committee to support the House's



Executive Offices and Foundation
7996 Darrow Road, Suite 10
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087

(330) 274-2272
(800) 233-8611

Community Services
1402 Boettler Road, Suite B
Green/Uniontown, Ohio 44685

www.hattielarlham.org

Vocational Services
1672 Norton Road
Stow, Ohio 44224

Center for Children with Disabilities
9772 Diagonal Road
Mantua, Ohio 44255

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.**

Regards,

Jennifer Sleeper, Vice President of Residential Services

Jennifer.sleeper@hattielarlham.org

769 Brooksedge Blvd
Westerville, Ohio 43081
614-607-7780