

**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 provide written testimony today.

My name is Tiffany Leach, and I am the Revenue Manager of Koinonia Homes Inc, and we serve individuals mostly in Cuyahoga and Summit Counties. Our agency provides a broad range of services including residential, day, employment, and transitional youth services administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD).

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.

As a working parent, I watched the constant staff turnover at my child's daycare center due to the job being low paying. Now, as an accountant for an agency serving the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) community, I see the same issues with staffing problems serving our (mostly) adult clients. It frustrates me to continue to see the most vulnerable Ohioans being served by the lowest paid staff.

Fast food and retail jobs in our urban area pay \$20 per hour. Ohioans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities deserve to have more professional and qualified staff than staff working in fast food and retail jobs and our services should be fairly funded so we can attract and maintain qualified and professional staff to serve our clients.

I am thankful for House Bill 33 as passed by the House; it is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services we provide. I 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 an hour. 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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