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Dear Senate Medicaid Committee:

Please accept this as my written testimony for the May budget committee hearing.

My name is Barbara S. Corner and I wish to tell you how important it is to provide funds to support people with disabilities and our senior citizens with the services needed to enable them to stay in their own homes.

I am both a person with a disability and a senior citizen. I am totally blind and have a hearing impairment. I am also a retired attorney and the mother of three grown sons. I worked as an attorney in Ohio and raised my sons after losing my sight. I receive services from the Franklin County Office on Aging.

Last year I was hospitalized several times for complications due to abdominal surgery. In September I had major surgery to repair the damage. I was unable to take care of myself when I was released from the hospital. I was very weak. I could not negotiate the stairs in my condo or do housework, laundry or prepare meals for myself. Luckily for me my twin sister was visiting from California and was able to stay with me because we were told by my social worker at the Franklin County Office on Aging that while I was eligible for home health care services none of the various agencies had enough staff to take me on as a client. With my sister's help I was able to regain my strength so when she left after about ten days I was able to stay by myself because my children were able to come over twice a day to flush my drip line and my daughter-in-law sent me food so I just had to heat it up in the microwave. She accurately described what she had prepared so I knew what it was.

Being able to stay in my own home during this time made all the difference for me because it was a place that was very familiar to me. As I stated I am blind and being in an environment that is unfamiliar is difficult for me and causes a great deal of anxiety. I have my house, food, medications, clothes etc. arranged so that I know what I have and where it is located.

I was also told by the James Hospital social workers that home health agencies had no available staff. I believe a large part of the reason for this is the low wages paid. It is critical that the workers who provide home health aid services make a good wage so that people who need those services can receive them and that the staff is qualified and can support themselves while doing this critical work.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Barbara S. Corner