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I would like to give proponent testimony for H.B. 225

Good Afternoon, Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee,

My name is Suzanne Turner, and I am honored to stand before you in support of H.B.225.

The State of Ohio has put forth many wonderful and important laws that have greatly improved lives; from keeping Ohioans safe during the pandemic to making parks and other attractions accessible for persons with disabilities. We are also fortunate to be an Ohio Employment First State. Therefore, it would be equally incredible to be added to the states who have eliminated subminimum wage.

As a former victim of this discrimination, I was able to propel myself into competitive employment. I stand before you as a retiree from the Social Security Administration and in 2010 who earned over 70k. I am also a former employee of Medical Mutual of Ohio and a nonprofit. Currently I am employed with the Department of Defense. I say this to say that if I had stayed in that environment, my opportunities would have been limited. It is persons like me who have the potential to pay back into the trust fund, pay taxes and be self-sufficient. Our children do not care that we are disabled. They want the Jordan's, attend high school proms and more as their friends do. This requires earning more than one dollar an hour.

This humiliating issue must be abolished. There is dignity of all work. However, that dignity is removed when persons with disabilities are not able to take part in the American dream. The dream of owning a home, the dream of traveling, the dream of earning equal pay along-side of nondisabled workers. Most of all, the dream to feel acknowledge, successful and accomplished. People with disabilities do not want a handout, just a hand up. Thus, not rely on a monthly benefit, such as Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid. To live in society, one has to have a competitive income, especially if you have the drive, ambition and equal opportunity to earn more than subminimum wages.

The most memorable event in working earning subminimum wage was when I achieved a task, the company would move me, so I did not reach minimum wage. The realization came to me later, when I inquired why I was being moved so often. It was the company wanting to continue receiving funding from the state, alleging that I had not successfully performed. I worked hard to ensure that I achieved as my "so called normal co-workers" so I could earn more money. However, assessments, which was the code used against me. At that time, the minimum wage was \$3.35 an hour. I earned \$1.99 per hour.

Also, another reminder was in the city of Cleveland, I was packing sponges into boxes. These boxes had to be filled to the top. They had to be 24/24. Each time I filled it up, I earned \$2.00. The sad fact about my experiences is that it is still prevalent in 2025.

Finally, the Americans with Disability Act will be 35 years old this year. As a birthday present to Ohio's disability community, unwrapping this gift of "abolishing subminimum wage" will be "the most wonderful time of the year" which would be Christmas in July.

Please take high consideration in ending this restrictive, and yet debilitating certificate!