

My written testimony as an opponent for HB225 comes from my position as CEO of a company employing individuals with disabilities at a subminimum wage and also the parent of an individual attending our day program. There are many individuals at our program who benefit greatly from the subminimum wage certificate. We employ roughly 50 individuals with disabilities. Of those 50, 3 are earning at or above Ohio's minimum wage rate and the others earn an average rate of \$4.41 per hour. Without the subminimum wage certificate, those 47 individuals would not be able to work. We have 6 local companies that provide us with small part assembly and the production of wood pallets. Without the subminimum wage certificate, Brookhill would have to stop all production and transition out of the workforce for our individuals. The 3 that are able to make over minimum wage should be able to go out and get jobs in the community, but 2 of the 3 have tried and come back to Brookhill several times over the years. One of the 3 works at a local restaurant but does not work enough hours to be able to supplement her income. Everyone else would be out of work. They are almost all capable of working in the community but trying to find businesses that will place them is difficult. At Brookhill, the paycheck that they earn is based on their abilities and it gives them a sense of worth that they might not have if they couldn't work here anymore. I urge you to speak to as many individuals in the DD community that you can. So many would not have the confidence that they do today without the ability to earn a subminimum wage at so many of the businesses across the state.

Speaking from a parent of a DD individual, programs like this are fantastic for him. He is 21 years old with the basic brain function of a 13 year old. He is unable to focus long enough to be able to work in the community. He has tried several times and failed but at Brookhill, he is able to work to his ability and take the necessary breaks he needs. He may only earn \$25 per week, but that is \$25 he won't be able to earn anywhere else. He is learning and growing in the Vocational Habilitation program at Brookhill and able to earn that subminimum wage because of our certificate. It brings him so much happiness to be able to earn his own money to spend as he likes. He wouldn't be able to do that without a program that is operating with a subminimum wage certificate.

Thank you for your time.

Sally Sutter

