To the Honorable Members of the Community Revitalization Committee
Ohio House of Representatives

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 585 "To amend section 5123.351 of the Revised Code regarding the authority of the Department of Developmental Disabilities to adopt rules regarding the use of community capital assistance funds."

As a parent of an adult individual with a developmental disability that has been served by the Butler County Board of DD for his whole life, this bill is very important to our family.

Ohio is facing a significant housing shortage, especially in affordable housing. For households at or below 30% of the Area Median Income, there is an estimated statewide shortage of 250,000 housing units. This shortage has a profound impact on individuals with developmental disabilities. Of the 108,000 Ohioans with developmental disabilities, 74% live with family caregivers, and 25% of those caregivers are aging. As we fall into this category, it has become an immediate concern to us as well as many other families like us.

With limited affordable housing available and a complex application process, individuals with developmental disabilities are often at a disadvantage when competing for housing. The challenge is even greater for those who require mobility-accessible units. This is why the Community Capital Assistance Funds addressed in House Bill 585 are so critical.

Under Ohio Revised Code 5123.351, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities adopted Administrative Code Rule 5123-1-03, governing the acquisition of housing through Community Capital Assistance Funds. Currently, the rule limits eligible housing types to single-family homes, duplexes, and quadplexes, with no more than four individuals living on a site. It also prohibits multiple structures on a single site or adjoining sites. These restrictions significantly limit housing options for individuals served by County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

The housing needs and preferences of individuals with developmental disabilities are as diverse as those of the general population. However, the current rule does not allow for a comparable range of options.

House Bill 585 would require the Department to adopt a rule that expressly permits a broader range of housing types and allows the blending of Community Capital Assistance Funds with other affordable housing resources. This flexibility would support the development of more housing units by enabling partnerships and creative funding strategies. It would also encourage innovative approaches to meeting the unique housing needs and desires of people with disabilities while promoting community integration.

For example, these funds could be used to support designated units within larger affordable housing developments. This approach would allow individuals with developmental disabilities to live in integrated settings with greater access to community amenities and reduced transportation barriers. In Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developments, units set aside for individuals with developmental disabilities could be complemented by housing for seniors and workforce residents, including aging caregivers and lower-income paid caregivers.

Importantly, House Bill 585 does not allocate new funding. Instead, it allows existing funds to be used more effectively and at greater scale, expanding access to community-based housing and creating a broader continuum of affordable housing options for Ohioans with developmental disabilities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to advance House Bill 585 to the House floor for consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Murray

Fairfield, Ohio

meganhmurray@gmail.com