Testimony regarding HB 585, 136th General Assembly

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I want to provide experience that may be helpful as you consider HB 585. Almost exactly eight years ago I testified for the Joint Legislative Committee on Multi-System Youth (MSY). I have included that testimony as a separate file as it shares the story of my son, Seth, as we navigated getting services and support at a time of crisis. The muti-system youth program was ultimately implemented and Seth, along with two roommates who had similar behaviors, was the first to move into a Multi-System Youth Residence in the State of OH.

Seth's experience, along with his roommates, was fantastic at the MSY home. Since then, he has "aged out" of this home and moved into a home, with the same roommates, in a supported living environment.

In reviewing HB 585 I think a lot of the same issues apply. The bottom line is that families like ours face a maze of agencies, resources and providers. Sources of financial support are often highly restricted or various agencies don't work together. The MSY project is a great example how the legislature can help the DD community provide more and better residential options.

Any legislation that allows more flexibility and access to support for these families that are in crisis is needed and welcome. Key points to HB 585:

- **Expands housing supply**: HB 585 gives the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities flexibility to modernize capital rules so communities can develop more accessible and affordable housing options for people with developmental disabilities.
- **Encourages innovative partnerships**: By allowing community capital funds to work alongside other financing sources and housing partners, the bill helps nonprofits, developers, and county boards collaborate to build sustainable housing solutions.
- **Advances community integration and choice**: Modernizing these rules supports person-center housing options that allow individuals with developmental disabilities to live in integrated community settings with greater independence and dignity.

I hope Seth's story is helpful to visualize the things families in the DD community face. Seth is grown, stable and happy now. We are no longer in crisis due, in no small part, to the success of the MSY program. However, many families are in crisis now as we were then.

Hopefully, HB 585 will be implemented to provide those families more options and flexibility.

Thank you,

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