I am writing in support of House Bill 585 to expand funding for housing options for disabled Ohioans.

As an older mother of a 28 year old autistic man, the question of where he will live when his dad and I are ready to downsize from our suburban single family home is currently THE issue that I grapple with.

Our son will always need supports and services but he is capable of some independence, and of course like anyone else, he deserves to have his preferences addressed. So, as an autistic with the social issues typical of his diagnosis, communal living, such as that found in a group home, is not for him. Not that there are enough group homes to meet the need!

But a small apartment, with or without a roommate, in a walkable neighborhood with a nearby bus route — that would work. An ADU jointly built with a disabled housing nonprofit in the backyard of a smaller house his dad and I could move to, and then bequeath to that housing nonprofit, is another situation I can imagine.

There are other possibilities too. We will certainly need technical support from a housing nonprofit to sort through the legalities and other practicalities, and needless to say, they will need funding and flexibility in using that funding.

I will add that funding is also needed to make disabled housing options affordable across the board. Disabled people on SSI receive just $994 a month; those on SSDI receive varying amounts but again, are on tight budgets and are well under the area median income. There is no way the need for housing for the disabled can be addressed without subsidies.And that need is critical.

Ohio provides some substantial supports for disabled citizens, and by extension, their families. I urge you to expand upon that system of supports and pass Bill 585.

Thank you,

Barbara S. Neman

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