all inclusive living

TESTIMONY ON HB 585
OHIO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION
MAY 19, 2026

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding House Bill 585. My name is Mark Dunham, and I am speaking in my capacity as Executive Director of All Inclusive Living (All In).

First and foremost, we want to express our sincere appreciation to Representative Odioso and Representative Lett for their leadership in introducing this legislation. For many years, All In and many of our peers in the disability community have supported modernization of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities' Community Capital Assistance Program so that it can support innovative multifamily housing developments that serve adults with developmental disabilities alongside the broader community. We were therefore genuinely excited to see this important legislation introduced.

HB 585 recognizes a reality that individuals and families across Ohio know all too well: there is a severe shortage of affordable, appropriate housing options for adults with developmental disabilities. Ohio urgently needs more housing, more creativity, and more flexibility in how we address this challenge. We believe this legislation represents an important and necessary step in that direction.

At All In, we are doing our part to address this need. We are currently developing All In Dublin, a 75-unit inclusive housing community in partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority and TFG Housing Resources. Construction will begin this fall on the project, which will be located at a transit-accessible site in Dublin and will include affordable apartments for adults with disabilities, older adults, and workforce households. Over the past year, we have received hundreds of messages from prospective applicants who've heard about the project and are hoping to be placed on a waiting list so we can attest to the extraordinary demand for inclusive housing options.

So we support HB 585, while also urging that it be strengthened through the inclusion of provisions that would prioritize integrated housing preferences like All In Dublin. I want to be clear that we don't take this position because of fear. We do not believe Ohio is at some terrible, elevated risk of making a large-scale return to the institutional models of the past. In fact, we should all acknowledge how much progress has been made over the last several decades.

The community settings rule and related reforms were developed during a moment in our country's history in which people with disabilities were too often segregated and isolated in large institutional settings and denied meaningful participation in community life. These reforms and safeguards were essential, and they helped move our system in a dramatically better direction.

Today, we are operating in an improved environment – not perfect but improved. Most providers, developers, policymakers, and families broadly understand the importance of community integration. We are grateful for that progress.

But while we may no longer face the exact same institutional threats of the past, we do continue to live with the legacy of decades of policy and financing structures that overwhelmingly favored disability-only housing models. Truly integrated housing communities—places intentionally designed for people with and without disabilities to live together as neighbors—remain exceedingly rare in Ohio.

Projects like All In Dublin simply do not yet exist here.

That is why we believe it is appropriate for Ohio to give preference to genuinely integrated housing models within this expanded funding authority—not as a restriction, and not as a criticism of existing providers, but as a way of strategically encouraging innovation and accelerating the development of housing models that have historically been under supported.

We believe Ohio has an opportunity to lead.

Across the country, communities are beginning to demonstrate what is possible when disability housing is approached not as a separate system, but as part of a broader vision of inclusive community living. Our project draws from successful models like Patuxent Commons, a nearly identical project in Columbia, Maryland, which combined affordable and market-rate housing for adults with disabilities, older adults, and workforce households in a single integrated development. When that community opened its housing lottery, nearly 2,400 individuals applied for just 76 apartments. The demand was extraordinary.

Of the 76 apartments, 19 – or 25% – were set aside and made deeply affordable for adults with disabilities. And eight of those 19 were specifically set aside for adults with developmental disabilities, thanks to funding from a Maryland Department of Health capital grant that effectively functions as the same financing tool that CCA, under this legislation, could become.

We believe Ohioans are seeking the same thing: housing that offers affordability, independence, dignity, and authentic belonging. Unfortunately, given the demand that exists, we're already sadly confident that All In Dublin will be wildly oversubscribed and barely make a dent in the need. So we are committed to doing more and encouraging other developers to do the same, which is why we support HB 585 with the suggested improvements.

There is also a practical financing reason to encourage integrated developments. By blending DODD capital funding with other housing resources such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, local housing authority and county board participation, philanthropic support, and conventional multifamily financing, integrated projects can leverage significantly more total investment and produce substantially more units overall. All In Dublin itself is being financed primarily through a highly competitive 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit award from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, alongside additional public and philanthropic support.

In other words, these models do not merely create inclusive communities—they also help stretch limited public dollars further.

We fully recognize that there will continue to be circumstances where more targeted or disability-specific housing models are appropriate and necessary. Our intent is not to eliminate flexibility. Rather, we simply believe Ohio should intentionally encourage integrated models whenever possible so that more developers, communities, and funding partners begin embracing this approach.

We believe HB 585 can accomplish both goals: scaling up urgently needed housing opportunities while also helping Ohio build toward a more inclusive future.

Again, we thank Representative Odioso, Representative Lett, and this committee for your leadership on this important issue and for your thoughtful consideration of our testimony. We hope all of you will join us this fall for the groundbreaking for All In Dublin and we look forward to working with you to create an Ohio that is more affordable, inclusive and accessible for people of all abilities and ages.

Sincerely,

Mark Dunham
Executive Director
All Inclusive Living