

Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget
House Finance Committee

Chairman Stewart, Vice-Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and esteemed committee members,

Thank you for taking the time to read this statement.

My name is Sarah Davies, and I am the mother of an 11-year-old daughter with profound developmental disabilities and medical complexities. My daughter, Evangeline, receives Home and Community Based Services through one of Ohio's Developmental Disabilities waivers. Evangeline is the oldest of 5 kids all ranging from 11-4. Our life is very busy, and while I have taken every opportunity to build community around us, we utilize Homemaker/Personal Care services via her waiver.

We have an amazing Direct Support Professional, whose presence and care of Evangeline allows me to ensure her needs are being met, while also allowing me to be present to meet the needs of my other children. It is my unyielding belief that Evangeline (as well as every other person with disabilities) belongs in her home, with her family, and in her community. One of the main reasons Evangeline is able to live a life of love and belonging is due to the commitment of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, our local (Lucas) County Board, and the dedication of Direct Support Professionals

I am so grateful for the support Ohio showed during the last budget and would request that the same support is offered this budget. Please support the Governor's proposed budget, and additionally **include a rate increase for DSPs in waiver settings and create a system to regularly adjust pay so we don't face a workforce crisis again.**

In addition to being a parent to a child with disabilities, I am also a professional who has worked with and for people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities for 23 years. I wanted to also take this time to request that you continue to promote other initiatives that will allow people with disabilities to live full lives and continue to contribute to their local communities and their state.

Please continue to support our I/DD system in all of its facets, including Self-Direction, increase our state funding in Mental Health services, and support initiatives for Disability Rights and Justice.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

