



## Ohio Self Determination Association

*OSDA creates change that empowers  
people with disabilities and their  
families to direct their lives.*

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### Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget

#### House Finance Committee

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

My name is Dana Charlton, Executive Director of the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA), a non-profit policy advocacy organization. The 19-member Board of Trustees for OSDA includes six (6) people with disabilities, five (5) family members as well as staff of provider agencies and county boards of developmental disabilities. OSDA is not a trade association, but an organization of members who share a vision to create change that gives people with disabilities and their families greater control of their services and their lives.

The majority of OSDA members who live with a disability and the OSDA advisory Council of Ohio Leaders (COOL) of 15 members with a disability, receive Home and Community Based (HCBS) services through one of Ohio's Developmental Disabilities waivers. On behalf of OSDA and its membership, I'm writing to advocate that Ohio keep investing in those who provide these services.

Before the legislature increased funding in the last budget, it was hard for those receiving HCB services to find people to support them in their home, to get to and from employment or to engage in any event or activity outside their home. Needed services could not be approved by County Boards as providers were not available.

The increases of the past budget changed that for many people with disabilities. These changes have made a real difference in the lives of people with disabilities and their families! Thank you for your past action to fix this problem.

OSDA is concerned that the Governor's proposed budget doesn't include more money for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) working to support people with disabilities by providing HCB waiver services. Without additional funds, DSPs will once again be forced to seek other employment and people with disabilities won't get the support they need, resulting in the same crisis that was just solved.

Please don't let that happen again. Instead:

1. Include a rate increase for DSPs who provide HCB waiver services that enable people with disabilities to live in their own homes or homes of family - a less costly option than moving to a nursing home or ICF.
2. Create a system to regularly adjust DSP pay to avoid this crisis in the future.

Respectfully,

Dana Charlton