

March 31, 2025

To the Honorable Finance Committee,

My name is Delcenia Brown. I am a DeafBlind ADVOCATE / RESIDENT of Ohio. I am not only a wife but a mom of four and a grandmother of 9. Born and raised in Ohio. Over the years despite my dual sensory loss am having Multiple Sclerosis (MS), I pride myself on being very independent and active in my community. I have independently accomplished so much such as graduating from high school and college, raising a family of four, serving in my community and holding a job and paying taxes.

I have always been grateful and never taken for granted the things I have been blessed to accomplish including enjoying basic quality of life that some have taken for granted such as going to the movies, going to church, going to a sporting event, going grocery shopping and even volunteering in my community.

I was delighted to hear that for the last two years, our new SSP Pilot Program has been successfully serving people who are Deafblind. However, when I found out that the budget did not allocate any funds for the next biennial year, I literally sat down and cried.

Those of us who are Deaf-Blind are concerned for our future. We need permanent funding for services to keep our basic quality of life.

Now during this period of my life an SSP, who can serve as my "eyes and ears," could aid me in this time of my life as a legal guardian of my mother and a rep payee of a sibling. having a co navigator would be so helpful. I want to continue to live independently in this world.

I plead with you to help us bring this vital program back and make it an established, permanent SSP program.

And I would greatly appreciate your support in finding a permanent solution for services to our underserved DeafBlind Ohioans.

Sincerely,

Delcenia Brown