

Ohio House of Representatives Finance Committee
Testimony of Caroline A. Lahrmann
April 3, 2025

Chairman Stewart, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the Committee,

I am a mother of twins who are 25 years old with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). I speak in support of two amendments made to HB 96, both of which have no fiscal impact.

1. The first amendment ensures the proper training of case managers, known as Service and Support Administrators (SSA), who work for County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. County Board case managers inform DD families about available services for their loved ones with DD.

Every Medicaid eligible individual with DD is entitled to a placement in an intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disability¹ (ICF). ICFs provide 24-hour intensive care. Families can waive an ICF placement to receive “waiver” services in their homes.

But SSA training requirements in Ohio law do not require case managers to receive training on ICFs. As such, SSAs are not equipped to inform families about ICFs. Thus, many DD families waive their loved one’s legal entitlement to an ICF without knowing what they are waiving. For individuals with intensive needs, this training failure directly affects health and safety. The SSA training amendment to HB 96 addresses this problem. It requires new case managers to receive training on ICFs, along with other DD services, such as waiver services, within the first 30 days of a County Board case manager’s employment.

2. The second amendment protects incompetent adults with DD from undue influence, financial harm, and abuse by removing language that would codify a practice called Supported Decision-making (SDM). The language allowed incompetent adults with developmental disabilities to independently enter into a legal contract to appoint a “supporter” to help them make decisions and to carry-out and implement those decisions. The language essentially set up a guardianship without the protections of guardianship. There was no vetting of the supporter or ongoing monitoring of the SDM relationship.

¹ Intellectual disability is a modern term for mental retardation.

By removing SDM language from HB 96, this Committee maintains protections in Ohio law which prevent the exploitation of incompetent adults with DD. It is important to note that adults with DD, like all Ohioans, can already ask a trusted family member or friend for input in making decisions without codifying SDM and exposing incompetent persons to the risks of a legal contract.

Thank you for acting to protect vulnerable individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Sincerely,

Caroline A. Lahrmann, Esq.
Parent of Henry and Elizabeth Lahrmann