

**Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget
House Health Committee**

Good morning, Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice-Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and committee members.

Thank you for letting me speak to you today.

My name is Nora Frecska, and I'm a Direct Support Professional (DSP). I work in Hamilton County, Ohio and provide services like companionship, activities and community engagement, housekeeping, cooking and transportation for our developmentally disabled clients. I've been a DSP for 1 year. I have taken this position in addition to working full-time in administration for Envision, the same company for which I am a DSP.

It is my understanding that before the last budget's pay increase, DSPs were struggling. Based on my own experience, we are still struggling. The only way to make ends meet is to pick up overtime hours and/or work a second job. It is exhausting and takes me away from my own family and having my own life.

I am new to this industry, and I see the importance of the work we do. Many of our clients have no family and are completely dependent on DSPs for their survival. It becomes difficult to consider leaving them behind for a better paycheck. I'm concerned because the Governor's proposed budget doesn't include more money for DSPs working in waiver settings. Without action from you, we'll be right back where we started. We can't afford to lose more qualified, caring workers.

I ask you to:

- 1. Include a rate increase for DSPs in waiver settings.**
- 2. Create a system to regularly adjust pay so we don't face this crisis again.**

Thank you for your time.

Nora Frecska

nfrecska@envisionohio.org
Envision
3030 West Fork Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45211
513-619-2904