



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

Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice-Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and esteemed committee members,

My name is Elizabeth Jones, and I am the Director of Community Programs for ARC Industries. Our organization has supported individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Franklin County since 1963. Our team of 235 employees is proud to deliver a robust array of adult day programming and career service options to nearly 1,300 Ohioans annually, as providers for The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD).

First, I want to express our deep gratitude for the investment in disability and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in the last state budget. Your support allowed Ohioans with disabilities access to the resources needed to find, secure, and keep meaningful jobs in their communities.

At ARC Industries, our Career Services Department supports more than 300 individuals each year through workforce readiness training, job search assistance, and job coaching. We have the honor of witnessing individuals with disabilities succeed in the workplace every day. We see their positive impact on local businesses and our economy. We know people with disabilities have diverse skill sets that are beneficial to all types of workplaces. However, only 38.5% of people with disabilities are employed in Ohio. With the proper provider support and accommodations, many more can be competitively employed in our state.

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of the budget initiatives proposed by Governor DeWine and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) as outlined in House Bill 96. These initiatives help ensure that all Ohioans have access to the resources and opportunities to be successful in the workforce and their chosen careers. The budget proposal also supports accessibility initiatives, internship opportunities, and state partnerships that help Ohioans with disabilities live, work, and thrive in their communities.

Meaningful employment is a pathway to belonging, purpose, and contributing to the broader community. It nurtures confidence, provides a sense of identity, and offers opportunities for growth, connection, and financial stability. Ensuring people with disabilities have access to meaningful work is crucial, as everyone deserves the opportunity to experience the benefits of a fulfilling career. The budget initiatives for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, guided by the leadership of Director Miller, will reinforce and strengthen the services provided by ARC

Industries. We encourage this committee to support the OOD budget proposal as outlined in HB 96.

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them! Thank you again for the opportunity and privilege to bring my testimony before you today.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. Jones".

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