

Testimony of Marci Straughter
Vice President, Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities
House Health Committee
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Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Marci Straughter. I am proud to be a board member and the Vice President of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. I am here to testify in support of House Bill 96.

As Vice President of the Franklin County Board of DD, my job is to speak up for people with disabilities. I have been on the board for three years, and I was appointed by the County Commissioners. I love being a board member because I get to use my voice to advocate for others. Since I have a disability myself, I know what it's like, and I can share my experiences to help others.

It is very important to have people with disabilities on boards like this. We know what works, what doesn't, and what we need to be successful. I can share both the struggles and the successes of using technology and other resources to live a full life.

I am not only a board member, but I am also an Ohio Tech Ambassador and an AngelSense Ambassador. I also use remote support technology. All of these tools help me be more independent in my home and when I am out and about living my life.

Technology helps me in many ways. As a board member, I use my iPad to zoom in on documents so I can see them better. In my daily life, I use technology to stay connected with my friends, play games, and even have virtual date nights with my boyfriend. It also helps me work from home and go out in the community when I give presentations.

That is why it is so important for Ohio to continue investing in technology for people with disabilities. Right now, there is a shortage of staff who help people like me. Technology helps fill that gap by making sure we can stay safe, be independent, and live our lives to the fullest.

I also want to talk about the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who help me every day. My DSPs help me cook, clean, go out in the community, write emails, and travel to my speaking events. They are a very important part of my life.

DSPs need to be paid fairly for the work they do. They have families to support, just like everyone else. When they are paid enough, they can stay in their jobs longer, which helps people like me. Over the past two years, DSP wages have gone up, and I have seen a big difference. My DSPs are more stable in their jobs, and that has made my life much better.

I want to thank this committee for supporting DSPs and technology in the state budget. Your support makes a real difference in our lives.

Thank you for your time and for listening to me today. I hope you will continue to support technology and DSPs so that people with disabilities can live safely, independently, and fully in our communities.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.