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Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget
House Health Committee

Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice-Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and esteemed committee members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I am Dennis Grant, CEO of United Rehabilitation Services in Dayton Ohio. Although based in Dayton we serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities from Montgomery, Greene, Clark, and Miami Counties. We provide special needs childcare, after school care, summer camp, adult day services, employment services and therapies for individuals of all ages and stages. Much of our support comes through the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of close to 90 employees are proud to provide essential services to 1,000 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I want to express our deep gratitude for the historic investment in disability services in the last state budget. The funding increase helped providers like us recover from a decade-long crisis that led to devastating workforce shortages. Thanks to your support, we have been able to:

- Reduce turnover from 34% to 25%, stabilizing our workforce and improving continuity of care.
- Increase applicants, allowing us to fill critical positions and provide more reliable services.
- Expand services to individuals we previously had to turn away due to staffing shortages.
- Implement quality measures, such as increase training and support for staff as well as retain a Quality Assurance Professional to keep us on track.
- Increase wages, with our Direct Support Professionals in both childcare and adult day services by almost 30% with an average well over \$18 per hour.



I want to share my appreciation to Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for honoring the commitment made in the last General Assembly by using General Revenue Funds (GRF) to maintain the rate increases that were funded in part with ARPA dollars. This investment provides much-needed stability for providers and the people they serve. However, the budget does not include any additional funding to further boost DSP wages, despite the continued workforce crisis and rising costs. The last rate increase took effect in July 2024, and without action, providers face a nearly four-year gap in rate adjustments—putting us right back in the crisis we just emerged from.

To ensure Ohioans with disabilities and their families have access to the care they need, we urge the General Assembly to:

1. Maintain the Governor's investment in ICFs, Multi-System Youth, and Technology First initiatives.
2. Include a rate increase for waiver providers to keep up with inflation and workforce demands.
3. Establish a mechanism for ongoing increases to prevent future funding crises.

Investing in DD services is not just about providers—it's about ensuring Ohioans with disabilities receive the care and support they need to live full, independent lives in their communities. We look forward to working with you to build on the progress you've made and keep Ohio moving forward.

Finally, please also know that the investment made in disability and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services in the last state budget. Your support allowed Ohioans with disabilities access and resources to find, keep and succeed at meaningful jobs in their communities. At URS, we work with close to 200 high school students and adults with disabilities each year to develop work skills and obtain jobs. Last year we successfully placed 62 people in competitive jobs.

This testimony also supports 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.

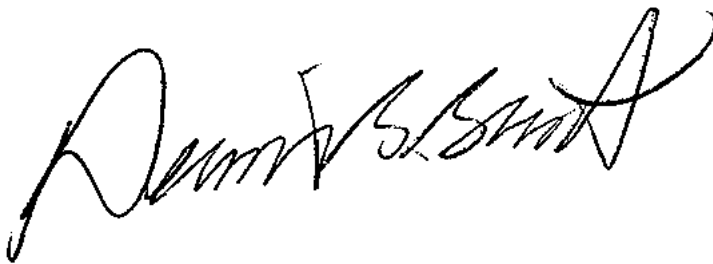


Employers need well prepared dedicated employees, and we are dedicated to preparing individuals with disabilities to meet that need and make the right job match the first time. In fact, over the past year we at URS have hired four individuals we were assisting in multiple capacities which demonstrates our commitment to this process. Work dignifies human beings, and we need your support to change the lives of Ohioans with disabilities and allow them to be independent and contribute to our workforce and society.

The budget initiatives for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, guided by the leadership of Director Miller, will strengthen the services provided by URS. 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 share my testimony with you today.

Thank you again for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.



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