



The Arc.

Ohio

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

**Testimony
H.B. 48
Ohio House Ways and Means Committee**

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Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy and members of the Ways and Means Committee, my name is Gary Tonks. I am the President/CEO of The Arc of Ohio. The Arc of Ohio is our state's oldest and largest volunteer lead organization, representing Ohioans with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and their Families.

The Arc created our first schools for children with disabilities, when children with disabilities in Ohio and across the nation, could be legally turned away at the school house door. As those children grew up, The Arc was instrumental in the creation of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities in 1967. As community services became available The Arc and our families laid the foundation for many of our not-for-profit services providers.

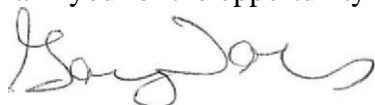
I have been an advocate with The Arc for over 50 years. I have personal experience as a family member and the longevity to know what life was like before a federal right to an education, before Medicaid, before Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and the Department of Developmental Disabilities existed. I am currently a member of the STABLE Account Program Advisory Board, within the State Treasurer's office and was active in the establishment of STABLE Accounts for Ohioans with disabilities.

A STABLE Account is a way to save for quailed expenses, invest for future needs and maintain federal benefits such as Medicaid and SST, which our lifelines for Ohioans with disabilities. **The** Arc of Ohio supports the proposed modification of tax deductions regarding STABLE account contributions.

Most Ohioans with disabilities are poor by definition. Their families have often devoted significant financial resources for the care of their loved ones. STABLE accounts permit families of children and adults with disabilities to plan for a time when they are no longer here, while protecting essential benefits.

HB 48 modifies deductions of STABLE Account contributions permitting Ohioans to ultimately contribute more for the support of their loved ones with disabilities, and has our full support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding this worthy modification.



Gary Tonks, President/CEO
The Arc of Ohio