

**Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding AM Sub H. B. No. 96. I want to call your attention to the Deafblind fund. This is an Appropriation included in the House Bill, and one that I hope the Senate will also support. This request for funding on behalf of Deafblind Ohioans is simply a request to renew funding for the Support Services Program that both the House and Senate funded in the current budget. It would be great to see the Senate increase the funding for this program, but at this point, we would be happy just to see a continuation of the current funding and program.

None of us, including myself, knows what it is like to be Deafblind. But whether it happened to us as a child or later in life, we all know what it's like to have something we cherish taken away from us. The support Services program for the Deafblind is close to ending its second year of operations thanks to a line item that Both the Ohio House and Senate supported in this current budget. The Columbus Speech and Hearing Center has exceeded all expectations for service delivery, and Deafblind individuals have thrived because of this program. We all knew that this was a Pilot program, but most programs that exceed expectations are rewarded and not abolished. You will hear testimony from Deafblind individuals whose lives have literally changed because of this program. Please don't take that away from them now.