



**Testimony on HB 96 Sub-Bill  
Senate Finance Committee**

**Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Esteemed Committee Members,**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Ohio's evolving system of supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). I come before you with two important messages: one of **gratitude** and one focused on how we can work together to ensure a **stable and sustainable future** for our system.

Two years ago, I addressed this body with a message of urgency. Our system was facing an unprecedented workforce crisis—one unlike anything we've seen before. Working in our field is among the most challenging and rewarding jobs, but we were losing staff across the state to higher-paying positions in non-critical jobs. We sought your support to stabilize our workforce, and **you responded with a clear commitment to Ohioans** with I/DD through desperately-needed funding increases. Thank you.

Because of your dedication, we left July 2023 with hope. Hope because of your belief in us as demonstrated by your investment. The funding we received provided much-needed relief, and many providers were able to stabilize their workforce for the first time in years.

Your support made a significant difference, and for that, we **thank you**.

We are grateful for the Senate's inclusion of the intermediate care facility professional workforce development payment, not capping the intermediate care facility program's reimbursement rates, and for backfilling American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) home and community-based services waivers rate increases with GRF.

Our message throughout the current and last budget process has been clear: it is crucial that we **protect the progress resulting from your last investment**. This requires ongoing service reimbursement increases for the system to remain stable. The Senate protected the investment in the sub-bill but does not include any such increases in home and community-based services in DODD's three I/DD-specific home and community-based services waivers. As mentioned earlier in this testimony, wages are improving and providers are experiencing stability. Our stability is fragile and without ongoing investment our gains in the workforce battle could slip away as quickly as they were realized.

As the Senate finalizes the omnibus bill, we encourage the Chamber to:

1. **Include a rate increase for DODD's home and community-based services waiver providers** to keep up with the real costs of delivering service while sustaining their workforce.
  - 2% increase starting January 1, 2027
  - See amendment SC1053
2. **Establish a requirement for ongoing home and community-based services waiver reimbursement rate reviews** to prevent future funding crises.
  - See amendment SC1023 and SC1053

Lastly, we are concerned about the sub-bill's changes to property taxes. Ohioans with developmental disabilities, their families, and the I/DD system that supports them relies on local levies for a substantial amount of funding and programing. Provisions in the sub-bill that impact the ability of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities to levy local funds threatens the County Boards' ability to pay for the services their residents rely on to live and thrive in their communities.

It is an honor to ask for your continued support and partnership as we work together to build a system that not only serves Ohioans with I/DD but also leads the nation in innovation and care. We have outstanding individuals working in this field, and it is a privilege to serve those who rely on our support across this great state.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.



Peter J. Moore, President & CEO  
Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA)