



**Testimony for Best Buddies in Ohio**  
**Legislation: H.B. No. 96**  
**Testifying As: Favorable**  
**Ohio Senate Finance Committee**  
**Friday, June 6, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Catlin Skufca, and I am the State Director for Best Buddies in Ohio. Best Buddies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for one-to-one friendships and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently, we serve more than 2,000 Ohioans with and without disabilities through Best Buddies Friendship Chapters in 58 schools throughout the state.

Best Buddies is a life-changing experience for a person with intellectual disabilities. For these young people, developing social skills is essential to successfully transitioning out of school and into the working world and community life. Best Buddies also transforms attitudes regarding the needs and abilities of people with disabilities.

We are here today to ask for your support. The House has included funding for Best Buddies at \$100,000 per each year of the biennium through the Department of Developmental Disabilities. We are appealing to you to include this allocation in the Senate budget. This funding is critical to maintaining our services throughout the state, allowing youth with disabilities to gain social and leadership skills that lead to their increased sense of self-worth, employability, and independence.

I am joined today by Alex Rogers, who will share how Best Buddies has impacted her life.

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Hello, my name is Alex Rogers. I am a member of Best Buddies. I started as a member of the Best Buddies Friendship Chapter at Ohio State University. I love Best Buddies because I have made friends and grown as a leader. One experience I'll never forget was leading a webinar called Spread the Word to End the Word as part of a national campaign to end the use of the R-word and promote the inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. That same year, I was the keynote speaker at the Best Buddies Champion of the Year Gala!

Now, I live on my own, and I have a job. I have made one of my best friends, Sharla Thomas. She is always there for me.

I went to the Best Buddies Leadership Conference in Bloomington, Indiana. I have worked on my public speaking skills. I have been able to speak at many events, and now I am serving as a leader at Best Buddies as an Advisory Board member, so I can be an advocate to increase our programs in the state!

Ohio needs more Best Buddies chapters because everyone should have the chance to have these kinds of opportunities. Thank you very much.

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