

**Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget  
Senate Medicaid Committee**

Good morning, Chair Romanchuk, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and committee members.

Thank you for letting me speak to you today.

My name is Kaila Jarvis, and I'm a Direct Support Professional (DSP). I work in Troy, OH and provide services like group employment, and pre-employment. I've been a DSP for two years.

Before the last budget's pay increase, DSPs were struggling. I loved my work but started looking for jobs and careers in other fields as the pay was much higher and would allow me to spend more time with my family without the burden of financial strain. It was stressful and exhausting.

Since the pay increase, things have changed for the better. My financial burden has diminished, and I have stopped looking for stability elsewhere, I am extremely happy that I can continue to work in the field that I am so passionate about without worrying about my bank account. I can now completely focus on our people served and have become a better DSP because of it. This has made a real difference in my life and the lives of the people I support. Thank you for recognizing the importance of this work.

I'm concerned because the Governor's proposed budget doesn't include more money for DSPs working in waiver settings. Without action from you, we'll be right back where we started. We can't afford to lose more qualified, caring workers.

**I ask you to:**

- 1. Include a rate increase for DSPs in waiver settings.**
- 2. Create a system to regularly adjust pay so we don't face this crisis again.**

The people I support rely on me and other DSPs. We need to make sure this is a job people can afford to do, so we can continue providing quality care.

Thank you for your time.

*Kaila Jarvis*

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