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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 Tish Arnett, and I'm a Direct Support Professional (DSP). I work at RT Industries in Troy, Ohio- Miami County. I've been a DSP for 2 years. I provide meaningful services including community integration, personal care, advocacy, independence and life skills.

Before the last budget's pay increase, DSPs were struggling. I love the work I do and the people I work with. Before the last budget increase, I was faced with the difficult decision if this was a sustainable career for me. As a single mother, I was struggling to pay my bills and provide basic needs for myself and my children.

Since the pay increase, things have changed for the better. As a single mother with no help, the budget increase was very much crucial and appreciated. I would still not be here without it. Every little bit helps, especially in a world where nothing is cheap and for one income homes, like mine. I can finally afford to invest in our company match retirement. I also have health insurance through my employer now, which is a huge relief. This has made a real difference in my life, my children's lives 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.


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*Helping people achieve personal success by developing skills
to confidently work, interact and thrive in the community.*

~ Safety ~ Collaboration ~ Camaraderie ~ Growth ~ Integrity ~ Excellence ~ Innovation ~

