

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

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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 Amy Tims, 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 personal care, transportation, advocacy and community integration.

I absolutely love the work I do and the people. Before the last budget increase, DSP's were struggling. I was faced with the difficult decision if this was a sustainable career for me. As a mother, I was struggling to pay our household bills, expenses and provide basic needs for myself and my children. Due to health reasons, I must be very careful to avoid high levels of stress and fatigue. The conflict of loving my job and not earning a livable wage was wearing on me mentally and physically. The thought of walking away from a career that I have fallen in love with felt devastating.

The recent pay increase made a real, meaningful difference. Things have changed for the better. The budget increase was crucial for myself, my family, my health and the wonderful people we serve. It is very much appreciated. I can finally afford to invest in our company and match retirement funds and provide basic needs for my family. This has made a positive impact on my life, my children's lives and the lives of the people I support. Thank you for recognizing the importance of this work.

But now I'm deeply concerned. The Governor's proposed budget does not include additional funding for DSPs working in waiver settings. If no action is taken, we risk undoing the progress we've made. Although I am at a livable wage, I still struggle financially with daily expenses and household needs.


We need continued investment in DSPs to retain qualified, compassionate professionals who provide critical care every single day. Please, don't let us slide backward. The future of this essential workforce—and the well-being of those we support—depends on your action.

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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to confidently work, interact and thrive in the community.*

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