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Thank you Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Schuring and Ranking Member Driehaus for allowing me to testify in front of the House Finance Committee today. My daughter Heidi Gwizdale lives at Youngstown Developmental Center and has for 21 years. She'll be 42 on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Heidi is profoundly mentally challenged and autistic. She's non-ambulatory and needs assistance walking. She probably functions on a 12 month old level. She wears Depends and has to have help eating. She has a problem swallowing and has severe PICA, where everything goes into her mouth. This is why I'm very anxious. She's had several emergency visits because of PICA. She's quick and without close attention, everything goes in her mouth.

I've been on the other side of this fence. I twice put Heidi in waiver homes. I was young and naïve and didn't want her in a DC. I didn't understand what the waiver program was. But I quickly found out. There was never enough staff. The staff didn't have training, not even CPR training. Clearly, they were low wage workers who just needed any job. The licensee was never on the premises and we were made to follow their rules. There's an open door policy at YDC. I can go there in the middle of the night if I want to, but that's not the case with group home.

Right before we finally moved Heidi out, they had baby gates piled up in the door way because one of the residents wouldn't stay out of her room at night. There was never enough staff to appropriately watch people. And her PICA got out of control. When she had a bowel movement she would pass grass, pine cones, you name it. I

moved her into a second waiver home but again there wasn't enough staff or oversight there and I finally made the move to YDC.

I just didn't know what the DCs were all about. But I'm a convert now and I never want Heidi to move from YDC. Heidi has one-on-one staffing ratio at YDC because of her PICA. She's like a baby. She just can't be left alone and needs intensive supports. At YDC she gets those supports.

She also likes her routine and doesn't even enjoy coming home anymore. I don't know how she would transition somewhere else. She's been at YDC for 20 something years. I'm petrified.

I just love the staff and the administration at YDC. I just want them to leave them alone. I've never been into politics, I don't follow politics so testifying is all new to me. But please consider keeping Youngstown and Montgomery Developmental Centers open for the families.

Thank you.