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Senator Scott Oelslager
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Sen. Oelslager:

I am Director of an Independent Living Center in Northeast Ohio. I have been in this position for 12 years. There are 12 CIL's in the state. Ten of the 12 receive Part C money from the Feds. Two exist on State money only (Part B). These two are the newest centers. As a retired special education teacher, I know about the education services the centers provide, whether it be during nursing home and youth transitions, advocacy (in the community and with IEP's), or teaching independent living skills. We are Western Reserve Independent Living Center at 4076 Youngstown Rd. SE Warren, Ohio 44484. We serve Ashtabula, Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties. Our phone number is 330-372-3325. We are open 8 to 4 Monday thru Friday. As with all centers, we provide information and referral, advocacy (systemic and individual), independent living skills, transitioning back into the community, and peer support.

Providing services to assist individuals with a disability to live independently is a wise use of state resources. Funding provided to the Centers for Independent Living helps keep Ohioans out of nursing homes and institutions which are much more costly than assisting someone to live independently in a house or apartment. Centers for Independent Living are unique because they serve people with any disability and of any age. More importantly, they provide a peer-to-peer AND one-on-one service right inside their own community. Nothing compares to this direct service of peer counseling. We can continue providing services as long as our consumers wish. In nursing home transitions we save the state over \$40,000 a consumer by getting them back into the community. Home Choice transitions can still remain consumers beyond the one year timeline.

We are constantly collaborating with other agencies to be a benefit to the community and its citizens, to live independently. With the opioid catastrophe, we are providing independent living skills to addiction and recovery centers to help them get on their feet. Addiction victims need a basis by which to be able to live independently. We also partner with domestic violence, homelessness and mental health agencies to provide the same basic independent living skills.

Ohio ranks at the very bottom of states in our region in the amount of state dollars allocated to assist CIL's. Thank you for your consideration of supporting the line item for the Centers for Independent Living so they can directly receive GRF again, and please remove the earmark. With the present proposed budget we not only lose \$43,800, but actually \$300,000 with the match we could draw down.

Attached here is a link to our centers short video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-sVCIIpYH8>

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Pam Davies, Executive Director
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