



**Testimony on HB 110**  
**House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee**

Chairman Roemer, Ranking Member West, and esteemed committee members,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Melinda Kale and I am the CEO of Work Leads to Independence, and we are located in Wood County and provide services in 6 counties. We are a not for profit private provider that provides supports for 100-125 individuals Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ approximately 40 staff.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine, Director Davis for the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). With these budget initiatives and the leadership of Director Davis and Director Miller, Ohioans with developmental and intellectual disabilities will continue to receive the vital services that organizations like mine provide.

The services that we provide insure the general right of every person to be able to make choices that affect their life and happiness. With decreases in funding many services have to be limited and we are then unable to provide the opportunities for these choices. We want to insure that we are able to provide these choices, while also providing wages that will help retain staff that are devoted to supporting the individuals who opt to utilize our services. The services that our agency provides are, NMT, ADS, HPC, Group Employment, OOD services and employment services.

To best support these services and the Ohioans who receive and provide them, I encourage you to add the following initiatives into Ohio's biennium budget:

- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to fund much needed Homemaker and Personal Care, Day and Vocational Services and Nonmedical Transportation Medicaid home and community based waiver services rate increase. *These increases will provide much needed funds for Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, support for other front-line professionals and sustain the infrastructure necessary to provide our services.*
- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to support the reimbursement formula for intermediate care facilities (ICF).
- Support a budget amendment that would allow ICFs to choose between a reimbursement rate freeze or a continuation of the formula for the first year of the biennium.

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March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021  
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- Support the creation of a Task Force to address our system’s workforce challenges. *This Task Force will identify several initiatives and projects designed to help providers recruit and retain a qualified workforce.*
- Support the as introduced budget for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them! Thank you again, for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you and if I can ever be of any help in this process, please let me know.

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