



**Testimony on HB 110
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
May 13th, 2021**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Committee today on HB 110. My name is Sara Eppard and I am the State Director of Dungarvin Ohio. We have offices in 4 Ohio cities, providing services in 12 counties statewide. We are a for-profit business that provides supports for 199 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ 223 employees. Dungarvin has been supporting individuals for nearly 30 years in Ohio, ranging from age 8 to age 95. I write today to encourage the Committee to increasing funding for services administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our staff turnover has increased from 45% to nearly 80%. Despite employing a full-time recruiter, there are weeks that have gone by with zero interviews in some areas. Most are turning down positions due to pay. Because of this sharp down-turn in our ability to recruit and hire crucial direct support staff, we are no longer accepting referrals for those in need of our services. We have recently given notice to over twenty individuals with developmental disabilities in the Cincinnati area due to lack of staffing.

The House's version of HB 110 makes a small investment in day services for Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. While any investment in these services is welcomed, I believe there is still more the General Assembly can do to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of services for Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. An investment in these services would mean money directly into the pockets of direct support professionals, decreasing our turnover and increasing our ability to take on services for more Ohioans with developmental disabilities. **My staff have done amazing and heroic things since the pandemic began, but they are tired, emotionally exhausted and need help. I encourage you to add amendment SC 2290 into the HB 110 to support the following initiatives to best support my staff, my services, and the Ohioans we support:**

- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities budget to fund much needed rate increases for homemaker and personal care, day, vocational and employment services, nonmedical transportation, respite services, and shared living under the three Home and Community Based Services waivers administered by DODD.
- Increase general revenue fund appropriations in DODD's budget to support the reimbursement formula for intermediate care facilities (ICF).
 - Allow a temporary change in statute to alter the ICF reimbursement rate calculations for the first year of the biennium.
- Support the creation of a task force to address our system's workforce challenges.

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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.**

Sara

Sara Eppard, State Director

seppard@dungarvin.com

614-547-8409

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