



INDEPENDENCE

OF PORTAGE COUNTY

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Testimony on HB 110

Ohio Senate Finance Committee

May 13, 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 Michelle L. Madden and I am the CEO of Independence of Portage County, and we are located in Ravenna, Ohio and serve Portage, Summit and Stark counties/ We are a not for profit business that provides supports for approximately 120 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ just under 200 employees. I write today to encourage the Committee to increasing funding for services administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

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.

Our agency is committed to providing valued quality services to over 100 individuals with adults and children with Developmental Disabilities in Residential Waiver settings, Integrated Care Facilities, Day Services, and Employment service. IOPCI has established an environment that promotes individual growth, community inclusion, person center quality of life. Throughout the pandemic, IOPCI have seen countless hours of hard work put forth by our amazing employees. They stepped up to safeguard the health and safety of our individuals we serve with Developmental Disabilities. Now it is your time to step up...these Direct Support Professional should be compensated properly for the job they perform and that is why we ask that you please consider the budget asks proposed by OHCA, OPRA, OACB, and The Arc of Ohio.

These amazing professionals however are becoming harder and harder to recruit and more importantly retain especially when they can make more on unemployment or at the local fast food or retail establishment.

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Our industry is at a cross in the road, unlike other industries that can close doors during slow hours or produce less widgets, we cannot! The population we serve would not get the basic care needed without the one resource our industry needs, a Direct Support Professional.

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.

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 the following initiatives into Ohio's biennium budget 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.

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.**

Michelle L. Madden

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