

Ohio Senate  
Finance Committee, Chairperson Dolan

Chairperson Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and Esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Peter Moore and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I am honored to be here today to provide testimony on behalf of the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), a statewide association that represents 180 private provider organizations serving over 32,000 people with developmental disabilities with a direct support workforce of over 24,000 strong.

Two years ago, Ohio's state operating budget set the foundation for us to begin to seriously take on the workforce shortage by increasing Homemaker Personal Care (rates) so we could raise the average wage for some Direct Support Professionals (DSP).

Today my message is simple. I am here to express our deep appreciation for this committee for supporting Ohioans with developmental disabilities and the organizations and DSPs who provide needed services every day.

We know this has been an especially difficult budget cycle. The pressure has been on and the expectations are high. We know we are not alone in the challenges brought on and made worse by the past year. We are grateful for your partnership as we work to address the most challenging workforce crisis our field has ever faced. In past testimony I described our workforce situation as an emergency and that is no exaggeration. In the face of those challenges, you have provided momentum and hope we need to take on this emergency. While we didn't get our full ask, the Senate heard us and provided momentum for this system to continue moving forward in the future. We are deeply grateful and know this was no small feat. By improving rates and wages for home and community based waiver services (HCBS) and keeping the funding formula for intermediate care facilities intact, we build on the foundation set in the last biennium budget as we work to secure a system of dedicated and caring DSP.

At OPRA we have four guiding principles that guide us. The first emphasizes the importance of quality relationships between a person with developmental disabilities and the professionals who support them. The second stresses the importance of trust in our system, the third keeps us focused on sustainability of the services we provide and the final principle emphasizes the need to respect all of the services that providers deliver. With your partnership and your actions with this budget you have helped us to address the most important principle, you have given us the resources to recruit and retain quality professionals who meaningful relationships.

We would like to again, offer our support to you as we see this budget through it's final steps. Thank you and we look forward to what we can accomplish with your partnership. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pete J. Moore  
President and CEO