



Ohio Senate Health Committee

Testimony on HB 110

Jeffrey S. Johnson
Executive Director
Weaver Industries, Inc.

May 6, 2021

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health 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 Jeff Johnson and I am the Executive Director of Weaver Industries. Weaver Industries has facilitated vocational opportunities for individuals with disabilities since 1971 and we are very proud to be celebrating our 50-year anniversary in 2021. We are a not-for-profit corporation employing and providing program services to over 200 individuals with disabilities in Summit, Medina, Stark and Portage Counties.

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.

I would like to focus my testimony on a couple of key areas. First, as you have heard from other testimony, our systems ability to pay a competitive wage to our DSP's will ultimately determine the level and quality of services our system is able to provide individuals with disabilities in every facet of services. Our system must compete for talent with every other industry not only in wages but in every fringe benefit category, this would include health insurance, paid leave and retirement benefits. All these areas are significant factors in the cost in addition to wages and play a key role in recruiting and retention of DSP's.



This emphasizes the need for increased Medicaid waiver reimbursement rates along with systems for rate changes that can be timelier and adjust with inflation and/or competitive wage adjustments. If our system continues to negotiate small incremental rate adjustments every 7-10 years, we will always lag behind and ultimately our services will continue to suffer due to our inability to secure and retain DSP's in our system.

Our system and funding also need to invest in rates that allow us to support individuals with disabilities in smaller, community-based groups while individuals are on their path to competitive integrated employment. This service can have a significant impact by bridging the gap from facility-based production level supports and fully integrated employment. If we make this investment in rates, I believe we can facilitate a more seamless transition for individuals with disabilities to integrated employment.

Thank you for your continued interest and partnership in our system serving in individuals with disabilities. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey S. Johnson".

Jeffrey S. Johnson
Executive Director
Weaver Industries, Inc.