



**Testimony on HB 110
Senate Health Committee
May 3, 2021**

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and esteemed 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 Laura LaGodney, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Ability Works, Inc. and we are in Sandusky, Ohio and serve in 6 counties. We are a not-for-profit business that provides supports for 353 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and we employ 45 great supportive professionals. For 45 years we have provided those in our community with developmental disabilities employment services, day services, transportation, and other services customized to their specific needs. I write today to encourage the Committee to increasing funding for services administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Our agency has been having difficulty hiring since February, which in turn hurts our ability to have people with IDD return to their support service programs after receiving their vaccination. Because we are not able to hire any new Direct Support Professionals, we are having to turn away requests for supports.

Our ability to hire qualified support professionals will not allow us to continue to provide Day supports, Summer Youth Employment, and Homemaker Personal Care at the levels before the pandemic. We are evaluating terminating one of our supports, because our resources are stretch, and our staff are tired.

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. This investment means that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can continue to thrive.

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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.**

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