**Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee Testimony by Lorraine Kaplan**

**June 5th, 2018**

Chairman Burke, Ranking member Tavares and other members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, my name is Lorraine Kaplan, mother of an adult son with cerebral palsy and blindness and I am writing to express my strong opposition to S.B. 218 – regarding minimum training and surety bonds for Medicaid Providers.

My son Jake was born 29 years ago here in Columbus, Ohio with a Diaphragmatic Hernia, requiring extensive surgery just hours after birth. Two days later, he was life-flighted to Cincinnati Children’s hospital, given a 10 percent chance of living, and placed on Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) to give him a fighting chance at life. After three months in Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Jake went home with a feeding tube which he has to this day to provide enteral feeding due lack of muscle control required for chewing and swallowing safely. After a very rocky start, Jake survived and went on to receive early intervention, special education preschool and school-age services, and to graduate from the Ohio State School for the Blind, all while charming everyone he meets with his quick wit, spectacular smile and love of life (including the Cincinnati Reds, and OSU Buckeyes)!

Due to lack of oxygen as an infant prior to ECMO, Jake requires 24/7 care and currently chooses to live in our home. He requires total assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, feeding and personal hygiene as he is not able to independently move his body in space due to contractures, spinal fusion, cerebral palsy and blindness. We are blessed that he is a recipient of a Medicaid waiver that provides homemaker personal care aides that help meet his needs, allowing my husband and I to continue our work outside the home during the past 25 years. During this time, Jake has had a number of aides who have been independent providers, several providing services in our home for more than 10 years each.

I am writing today to make certain this committee is aware of the crisis involving the severe shortage of direct care staff for consumers like our son Jake. Recent articles in The Columbus Dispatch on April 29 and 30th, 2018 [“***Crisis in care | Number of support workers for the disabled plummets as demand rises”***](http://www.dispatch.com/news/20180429/crisis-in-care--number-of-support-workers-for-disabled-plummets-as-demand-rises) shared frightening information about the shortage of direct care support workers available to meet the needs of people with different abilities. Currently when an aide is not available, the 24-hour care Jake requires falls on my husband and I to provide primarily “natural (unpaid) support”. My concern is that the additional requirements such as a surety bond will force more independent providers to leave the field of direct care, making it even more difficult to retain quality providers and putting more undue stress on his parents, his aging caregivers. As a parent of a young man with medical and physical challenges, I fear that this lack of quality providers will put people with disabilities lives at risk. People like Jake.

I urge you to oppose the surety bond requirement for independent providers as it stands in S.B. 218. Thank you for your consideration today.