

Testimony on HB 110
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
May 13, 2021

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking 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 Tom Weaver and i am the Executive Director of Choices In Community Living. We are located in Dayton, serving people with developmental disabilities in Montgomery, Preble, Butler, Hamilton, Greene, Clark and Madison County. Our agency is a non-profit that provides supports for over 400 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and we employ over 390 people. I write to you today to encourage the Committee to provide increased funding for services administered by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Our agency is experiencing an unprecedented period of unfilled Direct Support Professional staff. Our work is not the kind that can be addressed by improved processes or automation, it requires a trained caring professional to support individuals with developmental disabilities to be safe, healthy and have a life of meaning. However, because we have not been able to find employees, we have closed two service locations and have turned down requests to serve at 5 other locations. The end result is there are people with disabilities in our communities who are not getting the services needed to provide them a safe life, a healthy life, a life of meaning.

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 of Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We know from experience that there are wonderful people who would be excellent Direct Support Professionals in every community. They will come to do this work if they can also earn a living wage, a competitive wage, a fair wage.

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 DODD's budget to fund much needed rate increases for homemaker and personal Care, day, vocational and employment services and nonmedical transportation, respite services, and shared living under the three Medicaid 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 I 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.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. Thomas Weaver". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "W" being particularly large and stylized.

W. Thomas Weaver, Executive Director

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