



**Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget  
House Finance Committee**

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and esteemed committee members,

My name is Kara McConnell, and I am the Executive Assistant of Koinonia Homes, and we are located in multiple counties in Ohio. We are an organization that provides services for over 60 waiver and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or residential, day, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) as well as employment and vocational training through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. Our team of (number of agency employees) employees are proud to provide essential services to (number of people served) Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD and the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Miller for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). The changing labor landscape and accompanying shortage of workers, including direct support professionals (DSP), threatens our ability to provide the critical supports on which the people we serve, and their families rely. The budget proposed in HB 33 is a good foundation to help our system combat these many changes.

I have worked for Koinonia in an administrative role for over four years and have witnessed first-hand the shortages, the turnover, and the lack of funding for the people with IDD. Koinonia is 100% Medicaid funded, and we are tied to the rates which are outdated. Koinonia has had to raise its rates of pay beyond the rate of reimbursement we receive from Medicaid.

The Governor's proposed budget initiatives, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck and Miller, is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Koinonia Homes. With these budget initiatives, Ohioans with disabilities will continue to receive the vital employment services organizations like mine provide. We encourage this committee to approve the Governor's budget proposal for DODD and to invest additional dollars through budget amendment HC0656 into these vital services to raise direct support professional wages to at least an average of \$20 an hour.

With your leadership, together we can ensure these services are available to the Ohioans that so greatly need them! Thank you for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you today.

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**Creating Opportunities, Enriching Lives**

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