



# koinonia

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

My name is Lisa Yim, and I am the Administrative Investigation Manager with Koinonia Homes. Koinonia provides services in 8 counties across Ohio: Cuyahoga, Columbiana, Mahoning, Summit, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina. We are an organization that provides services to people with developmental disabilities in several programs: Residential (ICF, waiver), shared living, day program, employment services, vocational services, and transitional services. The services are administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. Our Koinonia team of 456 employees are proud to provide essential services to 340 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 (DSPs), 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.

At Koinonia, as well as other IDD organizations, the staffing shortage continues to be a challenge in the ability to provide adequate and appropriate staffing. The staffing crisis is due to the low wages, our DSPs need to work over-time or have a second job to make ends meet. Koinonia's hands are tied due to the reimbursement rates that are set by the State of Ohio. It is extremely important that our state officials resolve the funding issue, so our DSPs can make a fair livable wage and support their families. It is critical that state legislators invest in the care of people with developmental disabilities, so they can receive the care that they desperately need. With your help Koinonia and other IDD providers will be able to recruit and retain quality Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

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 ODD 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 again, for the opportunity and privilege to bring my concerns before you today.

Sincerely,

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**Creating Opportunities, Enriching Lives**

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