



**Testimony on SFY 24/25 Operating Budget  
House Finance Health and Human Services Sub-Committee**

**Chairwoman Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and esteemed committee members,**

**I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.**

**My name is Haley A. Kirby, and I am the Employment Specialist of RT Industries Inc., and we are located in Troy, OH.** Our organization is able to serve any county in Ohio but are actively serving Miami County and a few local counties **We are an organization that provides Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services funded by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) for upwards to fifty (50) school aged students through aging adults monthly of Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.** Our entire organization employs just over one-hundred (100) people. Approximately ten (10) of these employees provide VR services through OOD.

**I am very supportive of 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 job coaches, threatens our ability to achieve our mission of helping people with disabilities find great jobs in their communities. These budget initiatives, and the leadership of Director Miller, will support us to recruit and retain the staff needed to continue to provide vital employment services to Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities. Attached is an example of the great work RT Industries' employment staff accomplished this year through services and funding from OOD.

RT Industries primary focus is helping people with disabilities gain and maintain employment in competitive integrated employment. Our organization supports school-aged students with Pre-ETS and Summer Youth services. With adults, our supports range from Community-Based Assessments (CBAs) to on-the-job support such as Job Coaching.

Increased funding is a necessity because as Employment Specialists, juggling multiple different clients at once we need coworkers who will help to release this pressure, so we are able to provide the necessary and well-deserved support for our clients. It is difficult to maintain fellow Employment Specialists because our organization does not have the funding possible to provide a more livable income for their employees. With inflation, the cost of living has drastically increased. With this, it becomes almost impossible to live off the wages provided to us.

**We encourage the General Assembly to approve the Governor's budget proposal for OOD.**

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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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