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**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 the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Nick Snyder and I am an Employment Specialist of RT Industries, and we are located in Troy Ohio, serving Miami, Shelby, Darke, Auglaize & Montgomery Counties. We are an organization that provides day, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Our team of thirty (30) Direct Support Professionals are proud to provide essential services to over one hundred fifty (150) Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities each month.

I am very supportive of the budget initiatives outlined by Governor DeWine and Director Hauck for DODD. 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.

As an Employment Specialist it has been a struggle to maintain the best possible service we can provide. Because of staffing and retention issues with employees, it has been difficult to provide services to increased caseloads. Our training process is very in-depth and requires hands on learning, but because of a lower pay scale it is very difficult to retain employees long enough to even complete the training before they decide to move on to a higher paying position some where else.

The services I provide as an Employment Specialist is very important to the people we serve because they rely on our assistance in finding, obtaining, and retaining employment. It is such a wonderful feeling helping someone find employment, and for them to tell you how much having a job and being able to make money will improve their life. Another part of my job is helping those who current have employment and wish to maintain it long term. As an Employment Specialist, I maintain connections with employers and have monthly check-ins with the employees we serve. It is important that we check in and assist with issues that may arise, such as further training or any payroll issues. Our individuals rely on us to speak to HR or Supervisors if they do not feel comfortable doing so. We give that safety net feeling for those we serve who are employed, and with out that, some of the individuals we serve would not be able to thrive and maintain the lifestyle that they love.

*Helping people achieve personal success by developing skills
to confidently work, interact and thrive in the community.*

~ Safety ~ Collaboration ~ Camaraderie ~ Growth ~ Integrity ~ Excellence ~ Innovation ~





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The Governor's proposed budget initiatives, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck, is a great foundation to reinforce and rebuild the services provided by RT Industries. **We encourage this subcommittee to approve the Governor's budget proposal for DODD and to invest additional dollars into these vital services to raise direct support**

professional wages to at least an average of \$20.64. This investment will help us recruit and retain the workforce needed to continue to provide our quality services.

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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