

Chairperson Carruthers, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB33.

My name is Kyle Garvey. I'm 34 years old, living in Columbus Ohio, and I have cerebral palsy significant enough that I need support from caregivers every day. I am enormously grateful to all of them because without their dedication I'm fairly sure that I could not function.

I know you've heard many angles on the importance of direct care to Ohioans, various reasons Gov. DeWine's budget proposal is good, but I want to share a personal reason: direct care support is the one and only way I can get out of bed and experience life. I don't have an extreme disability, I'm pretty average, but I do use a wheelchair and can't control my muscles so well.

Four hours in the morning (shower, into my chair, breakfast, toilet, etc.), then a couple more shifts of a couple hours each (meals, etc.), and then back to bed. Every day. It's quite simple but quite essential, surprisingly complex sometimes.

Life itself, all the beauty in there, is easy to take for granted or just dismiss. 'Yeah, sure, got out of bed this morning, lived more life, yes'; but what if it weren't so easy? What if it all had to be arranged ahead of time, via state-supported caregivers that were either supported or abandoned?

There are some easy outs in my situation -- 'probably, if push came to shove, his family could swoop in there', 'maybe he could become a lot stronger and do it himself' -- but at present, realistically, only outside caregivers support me every day as I need. I value all of them and I'll do whatever I can for them. That may not be much personally, but I do what I can, all I can, and I hope that you support them as well. For my sake and for theirs.

It means a lot that someone dedicates hours of their life toward someone else, and we need to support that kind of nobility whenever we find it. I respect and appreciate it myself, but my appreciation can't be as concrete as others'. Please be generous and firm in your budgetary decisions. Thank you.

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