

**Testimony on HB 33**  
**Senate Finance Committee**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and esteemed committee members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today.

My name is Howard Pincham, and I am the Chief Information Officer of the Independence, Ohio-based Koinonia Homes, Inc. We provide intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and residential, day, and employment services through the home and community-based waiver program administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). We serve in Cuyahoga County and several Ohio counties surrounding the greater Cleveland area. Our team of 450 employees are proud to provide essential services to more than 350 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Koinonia provides a home for over three hundred individuals. Our DSPs, their supervisors and support staff are all dependent on the Medicaid system to fund their wages. Frankly, I/DD providers in Ohio do not receive enough funding. Koinonia pays DSPs and support staff wages more than what we receive from Medicaid. We do this to stay competitive in a labor market that pays a higher wage to sort packages than Koinonia can pay for the expertise required to properly care for individuals like Katie. Low pay is a factor of the 50% turnover rate among DSP positions among all I/DD providers. Many providers, including Koinonia, have closed locations because we could not assign enough staff to support them.

I am responsible for implementing and maintaining technology at Koinonia. Since my first day on the job, almost four years ago, I have seen our dedicated Direct Service Professionals, the "DSPs", serve individuals that live with a variety of physical and mental challenges. Day and night, summer and winter, our DSPs provide a home for these wonderful people.

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 budget initiatives for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, guided by the leadership of Director Hauck and Miller, will reinforce and rebuild the services provided by Koinonia Homes. We encourage this committee to further invest additional funds on top of the House-passed budget for DODD and maintain funding for OOD at the House-passed levels.

We're confident this investment will enable us to reduce turnover, increase retention, and reduce hours dedicated to training and recruitment. It cannot be overstated how impactful continuity of care is for the individuals we serve. Institutional knowledge can only be built through a stable and revitalized workforce. We currently have open beds across our organization due to our staffing crisis as we cannot meet the safe staffing ratios required by the state. Increasing the direct support professional wages will ensure we provide optimal care to our individuals and be a stable resource to the communities we serve, and the county board.

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.

*Howard Pincham*

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