

- My name is Donna L. Schultz, I live in Canal Winchester, Ohio.
- I identify as being DeafBlind. I was born Deaf. My low vision is as a result of Optic Nerve Atrophy since my childhood. Six years ago Glaucoma and Double vision.
- I am here to represent the DeafBlind communities in Ohio. I am the president of Ohio Association of the DeafBlind (OADB), a 501©3 nonprofit for six years.
- I am a strong advocate to helping DeafBlind people of Ohio. I am also a member of the American Association of the DeafBlind (AADB).
- My education background: Accounting on AAS degree. I graduated from the National Technology Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York. I worked for Department of Defense for 33 years. Now I am retired.
- People who have both, a combined severe hearing and vision loss (commonly known as “DeafBlind”) have no access to qualified direct services that allow them to accomplish day to day tasks to live a full and independent life.
- OADB requests statewide “Support Service Provider “ (SSP) services for DeafBlind Ohioans.
- We are ask for funding for a pilot SSP program which we’d like to see be provided under Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) budget. Possible solution

is that OOD adds a Line item to their budget to include SSP services?

- Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) at one time provided non-vocational and vocational services to DeafBlind Ohioans. They've since cut non-vocational funding which resulted in the closure of the DeafBlind Outreach Center and also contributed to the closing of the Central Ohio Vision Center which also provided services to DB Ohioans.
  
- DeafBlind Ohioans ages 18 and above lack SSP services in Ohio. There are over 30 SSP services offered throughout the US. DeafBlind services here in Ohio are limited to:
  - Ohio State School for the Blind toddler to age 21- have DeafBlind program.
  - Age 22 to up lack of services in Ohio.
  - Only Franklin County serves Support Service Provider for only adults ages 60 and older.
  
- Previously, Ohio DeafBlind Outreach Program (ODBOP) of Columbus Speech & Hearing Center offered DeafBlind Ohioans a place where they could get training to learn to become independent.
- This include Communication & Technology, Vocational Training and Employee support, Life Management skills, and Consultation & Education, and DeafBlind Resources. Now ODBOP no longer runs due to lack of state fund.
  
- Approximately 85,000 combined hearing and vision loss individuals surveyed by 2021 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey. HKNC and others identified about 3,500 DeafBlind Ohioans.

- OOD vocational services can assist Deaf people, provide opportunities for them to find SSP jobs being that Deaf and DeafBlind people have the same language communication skills (American Sign Lounge – ASL and Tactile ASL)
- Thank you senators for listening to my testimony. I hope that we can count on your support for the DeafBlind Services amendment in HB33.