



Kerstin Sjoberg, Executive Director of Disability Rights Ohio
Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 33
Senate Finance Committee
May 25, 2023

Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written-only interested party testimony on House Bill 33 (HB 33) the state's biennial budget. My name is Kerstin Sjoberg and I am the Executive Director of Disability Rights Ohio (DRO).

DRO is the state's designated protection and advocacy system with the mission to advocate for an equitable Ohio for people with disabilities. DRO would like to applaud the Governor for making substantial investments to increase funding for direct care worker wages and the House building upon these investments in the substitute version of HB 33. This is an incredible step forward to ensure disabled Ohioans can live independently in their homes and communities. The home and community-based service (HCBS) system has been historically underfunded and now more than ever there is a critical need to ensure individuals can access care in their homes.

This testimony will address two (2) issues related to the substitute version of HB 33:

- 1) The need to increase wages for direct care workers; and**
- 2) Increasing disabled representation on county boards of developmental disabilities.**

I. Direct Care Worker Wages

DRO applauds the House for establishing an average wage for direct care workers to \$17/hr in 2024 and \$18/hr in 2025. This is a necessary investment, but more is needed. Disabled advocates and caregivers are advocating for base wages of at least \$20/hour to ensure disabled Ohioans have the support they need to live independently in their communities. In addition, we applaud the committee for ensuring wage increases are applied across all service systems –Medicaid, Aging, and Developmental Disabilities. Currently, wages differ across systems leading to direct care workers to leave one system for another.

In addition to wages, to ensure the direct care workforce is stabilized there needs to be a mechanism establishing long-term wage growth and support for paid benefits. Currently, nursing homes have a structured rebasing system to increase rates but a similar mechanism does not exist for home and community-based services and supports. By establishing a similar structure, the legislature would be able to ensure sustainability in a system historically underfunded. And by increasing funding to provide benefits to these essential workers, Ohio will be able to attract a high-quality workforce supporting disabled people to live independently in their homes and communities.

II. Increasing disabled representation on county boards of developmental disabilities

The House amended Governor DeWine's proposal to require county boards of developmental disabilities appoint at least one individual who is eligible to receive services by providing the ability for county commissioners to appoint someone not eligible to receive services so long as a letter is provided to the county board with an explanation as to why an appointment was not possible. This new language does not satisfy the original intent as proposed by Governor DeWine and allows counties to circumvent an important shift in representation of disabled people in systems that provide them services. Disabled Ohioans should be at the decision-making table, especially when those decisions are about services affecting them. Governor DeWine's proposed provision was a clear step towards equitable policies for disabled Ohioans, the House version is a step backwards.

DRO appreciates the time and consideration of these important pieces within HB 33. Raising wages and increasing representation are two important steps forward to ensure disabled Ohioans can live independently in their homes and communities. We look forward to working with members of this committee and the Senate as the bill moves forward.

Thank you again for opportunity to provide interested party testimony in consideration of HB 33, please feel free to reach out to me or Jordan Ballinger, Policy Director at 614-466-7264 x135 or jballinger@disabilityrightsohio.org.

If you couldn't get out of bed without help, you'd want to make sure the person who helped you would be there every morning. There is a direct care workforce CRSOS. I would people live here too. If you aren't saying no, it's because

Direct care is important because it gave my grand-father the ability to be in his home & with his family in the last couple months of his life. In order to allow everyone the ability to spend their life where they want, please increase the wages for DCW

something is wrong! That kind is offering \$15/hr, isn't the care we need to be free worth \$20/hr?

Representative Murrin
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Senator McColley
Senate Building
2nd Floor N., Room
222 - 1 Capitol Sq.
Columbus, OH 43215



5/18/23

Dear Rep. Rogers,
I am asking you to help raise the hourly wage for care givers to \$20/hr. They more than earn it. *C heddell King III
1205. Delaware Sylvania Rd.
Julesdo, Ohio
43015

5/18/23
Dear Rep. Hering,
I work hard at my job. The DSPs will be hard on their jobs. We would you to work hard to increase wages & benefits for care givers.

To
Rep. Rogers
775. High St.
10th floor
Columbus, Ohio
43215

* C heddell King III
1205. Delaware Sylvania Rd.
Julesdo, Ohio 43015

To
Rep. Hering
775. High St.
13th floor
Columbus, Ohio
43215



If you couldn't get out of bed without help, you'd want to make sure the person who helped you would be there every morning.

There is a direct care workforce CROSS.

Disabled people live here too. If you aren't seeing us, it's because

Direct care is important because it gave my grandfather the ability to be in his home & with his family in the last couple months of his life. In order to allow everyone the ability to spend their life where they want, please increase the wages for DCW to \$20 an hour! - Sally

something is wrong!
Fast food is offering \$15/hr, isn't the care we need to be free worth \$20/hr?

Representative Merrin
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Zazzle



5/18/23

Dear Rep. Rogers,
I am asking you to help raise the hourly wage for care givers to \$20/hr. They more than earn it.

* Chester L King III
1205. Hallandsylvania Rd. 43215
Tledo, Ohio 43015

TO
Rep. Rogers
77 S. High St.
10th floor
Columbus, Ohio

Zazzle



5/18/23

Dear Rep. Merrin,
I work hard at my job. The DSPs work hard @ their jobs. We would you to work hard to increase wages & benefits for care givers.

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Tledo, Ohio 43015

TO
Rep. Merrin
77 S. High St.
13th floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Zazzle



Zazzle



This painting by Alicia depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

So many with accessibility issues cannot access adequate healthcare. Home health workers are critical in providing services to individuals with disabilities. Raising their wages to \$20/hr will ensure future access to health services for all those in need. Thank you for your support!

~~Alicia~~ Alicia
Klein
Klein@rockets.ohio.edu

SENATOR GAVARONE

SENATE BUILDING

1st FLOOR S. ROOM 138

1 CAPITAL SQUARE

COLUMBUS, OH 43215

This painting by Laura depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Direct care is important because without it, I wouldn't have been able to spend the last few months of my grand father's life with him during Covid. I will forever cherish the time I got with him & it is directly because of the Direct Care Workers who supported & cared for him.

— Sally Fish

Please
raise
wages to
\$20 an hour!

Senator Hicks-Hudson

Senate Building Ground

Floor S., Room 057 / 1 Capitol

Square Columbus, OH
43215

This painting by Jennifer depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator Gavarone,

It has been difficult to recruit Direct Care Workers to work in my home and I fear that without staff I could end up in an institution or face some serious complications in life. I ask that you raise the wages to \$20 an hour for all systems of care in OH. From Yolonda.

Senator Gavarone
Senate Building
1st Floor S., Rm 138
1 Capital Square
Columbus, OH
43215

This painting by Courtney shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

Having spent over 3 months in a facility due to complications of transverse myelitis, this artwork resonates with me. Having to wait for overwhelmed staff to assist you is frustrating, stressful and sometimes harmful. Once I was able to return home with home healthcare my physical & mental improvement was remarkable. Please raise wages for home care workers to help others heal as well! Thank you for your support!
Kathleen Allen 13@rockets.utledo.edu

SENATOR NICKS-HUDSON
SENATE BUILDING
GROUND FLOOR, ROOM 057
1 CAPITAL SQUARE
COLUMBUS, OH 43215

This painting by Courtney shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator,

Please raise the wages of all systems of home care to \$20 per hour. I need caregivers to help me get on the bus to go to a day program. Without it I will not be able to do this.

Michelle Sandfoss

Senator Gavarone

Senate Building

1st Floor S Room 138

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio

43215

This painting by Jennifer depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator,

Please raise the wages of all systems of home care to \$20 per hour.

It is impossible to get decent home care & people are dying & being abused.

Please help. We are all important. Diane Jones

Senator McColley

Senate Building

2nd Floor N., Room 222

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio

43215

When I was younger, I was denied
education and I was told that
effort how hard I studied ^{is} restricted, no my
I can't to be
test son participate and there
was no one to help. ^{the} ^{workers} ^{minimum} ^{wage} ^{is} ^{low}
the workers ^{minimum} ^{wage} ^{is} ^{low}
so the ^{text} ^{behind} ^{me} ^{work} ^{it} ^{be}
alone.

Help me please!

Representative Merrin
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Granting access to care
can change lives and
investing in care workers
helps propel the world forward
Be brave enough to make
that change. Vote to raise
the minimum wage to \$20/hour
for care workers.

A better world is worth
fighting for and it is
possible.

Repri
esentative Ghanbari 77
S. High Street, 13th floor
Columbus Ohio 43215

This painting by Laura depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Moms shouldn't have to quit their jobs and live in poverty to care for grown disabled children. There aren't enough care workers. Even when they love this job, they can't afford to work it. We deserve care workers who can stay. Raise wages to \$20 an hour. Interdependence is access.

Representative Williams
77 S. High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

This painting by Laura shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

May 18, 2023
Dear Senator,
Larry, Anka,
Cherelle, Melissa,
Ryan, Toni, Jessica
our caring team
works hard & has
earned the right to a
decent hourly wage.
\$20/hr. is the goal.

Chester King
120 S. Hal. - 5th Fl.
Tulledo, OH 43615

Sen. Hicks-Hudson
Senate Bldg.
Ground Floor S.
Room 0.57
1 Capital Square
Columbus, OH
43215

This painting by Laura depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator Hicks-Hudson
One in eight direct care workers live in poverty, because of this, there is a severe shortage of DSKs. Unfortunately, this has a negative effect on people who depend on them for their quality of life. They help individuals live & work independently in their community. Please raise their wages to \$20.00 an hour so they can stay in the field & have a good quality of life.

Senator Hicks-Hudson
Senate Building
Ground Floor S. Room 083
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

To Rita Fox

This painting by Alicia shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

Disabilities, elder care, child care, mental health, homelessness, violence, health care - all these things are only photo ops to politicians. Time to really address them.

Sen. McColey
Senate Bldg.
2nd floor N.
Room 222
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio
43215

* Chester & King
120 S. Hullard / sylvania Rd.
Saledo, Ohio
43615

This poem by JT describes the fear of life without support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator,

Please raise the wages for all systems of home care to \$20 per hour. I need a caregiver to help me get on the bus to go to a day program. Without help I cannot do this.

Michelle Sandfoss

Senator Hicks-Hudson
Senate Building
Ground floor, Rm 057
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio
43215

This painting by Alicia depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator Garavone,

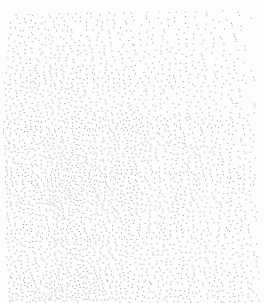
One in eight direct care workers live in poverty. Because of this, there is a severe shortage of DPs. Unfortunately, this has a negative effect on people who depend on them for their quality of life. They help people live & work independently in their communities. I respectfully ask that you raise their pay to \$20 an hour. This will help them to stay in the field and have a better quality of life. JoRita Fox

Senator Garavone
Senate Building
1st Floor S., Room 138
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

This painting by Georgie shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

Dear Representative Merrin,
I am one of your constituents. Care is important to me because without care workers, I would not be able to go to church. Church is very important to me. I ask that you raise the wages to \$20 an hour for all care workers in all systems.

COURTNEY



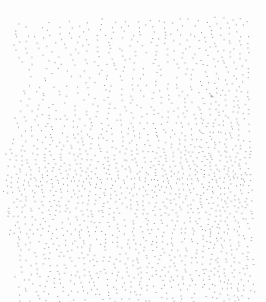
Representative Merrin
77 S. High Street
13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

This painting by Jennifer depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator Gaverone:

My sister needs a direct care worker to drive her to work in the food court at the University, but the pay rate is so low and it takes so long for the state to pay her that it's not worth it. My retired parents are paying out of pocket for her transportation.

- Katie Thomas



Please raise wages to \$20/hour.

Senator Gaverone
1st Floor S. Room 138
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH
43215

This painting by Alicia shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator,

Please raise the wages of all systems of home care to \$20. It is impossible to get decent care and people are dying & being abused. It is awful.

Diane Jones

Senator Gavarone
Senate Building

1st Floor S. Room 138

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio

43215

This painting by Jennifer depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Senator,

Please raise the wages of all systems of home care to \$20 per hour.

It is impossible to find decent care & people are dying & being abused.

This is a travesty. People matter. Please help!

Diane Jones

Senator Hicks-Hudson

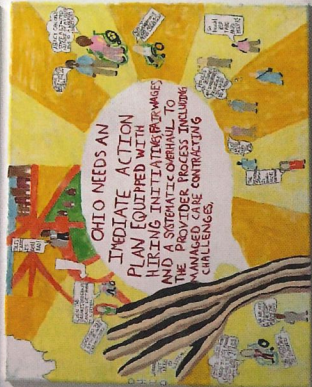
Senate Building

Ground Floor 3., Room 057

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio

43215



Ohio Direct Support Crisis

To whom it may concern,
American Health care has been unaffordable for years. But how lucky are the people who have a choice to take their children in for treatment! Can you imagine watching your child, your sibling, your parent lying in pain with no treatment, because



nurses are under-funded?
This is our Reality
On top of this -
We already pay taxes that are supposed to help our families in situations like this. Please
reallocate the seed funds! we need



zazzle

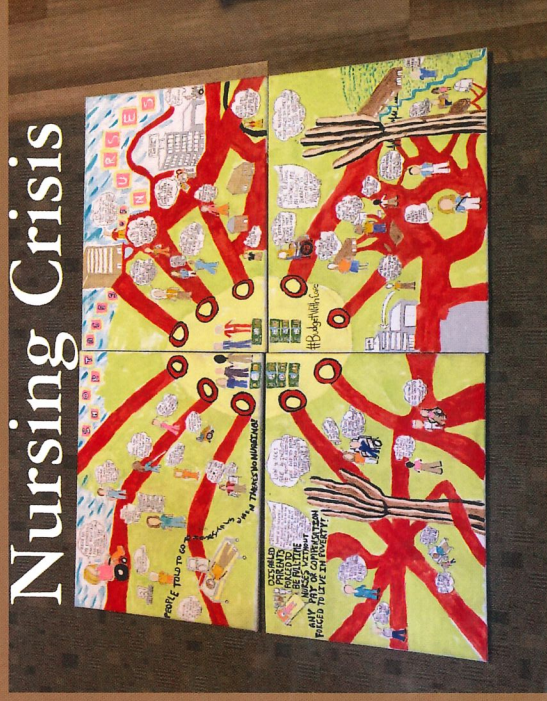
DSP's

DSP's ARE needed - in our field, so very badly. It leaves the folks we serve in need of supports. It is our part to find good people who will work & serve. The way we need them. Please help & support DSP's.



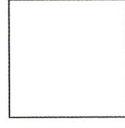
Zazzle

Ohio Medicaid Home Care



#ChangeWagesChangeLives

DSP's

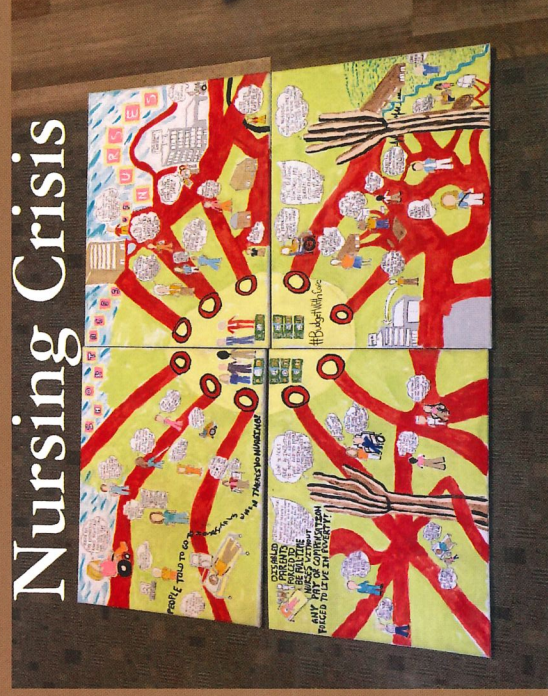


DSP's ARE needed in our
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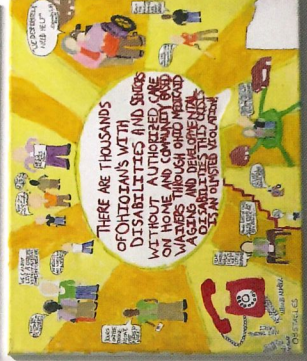
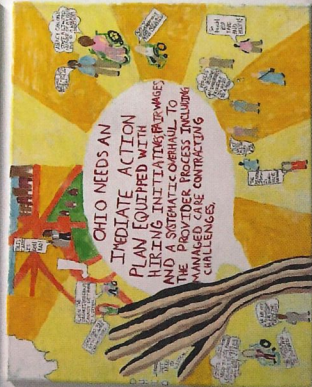


Zazzle

Ohio Medicaid Home Care



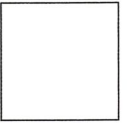
#ChangeWagesChangeLives



Ohio Direct Support Crisis

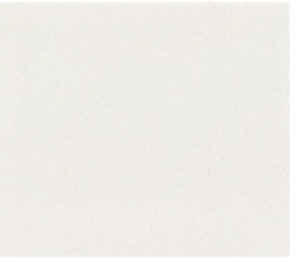
To whom it may concern,

American Health care has been unaffordable for years. But how lucky are the people who have a choice to take their children in for treatment! Can you imagine watching your child, your sibling, your parent lying in pain with no treatment, because



nurses are under-funded?
 This is our Reality
 + On top of this-
 We already pay taxes that we supposed to help our families in situations like this. Please reallocate the existing funds! reallocate the existing funds!





This painting by Alicia shows what life feels like without support from direct care workers.

I am in support
of taking action to
make ^{support} nursing services
& direct care services
readily available
for individuals
w/ disabilities.

Hell No! Never a Nursing Home!

Never an institution and never a nursing home!

Hell No! I won't go!

The care crisis is in nursing homes too

Far worst then in our homes

We have something if we got someone at home

In nursing homes you are alone there is No One who cares

Many People who work there don't care

and don't treat you like you are family

Not a life I want to live. In nursing homes you are alone

Hell no! I won't go! I won't go if I can help it!

Raise the wages for our home care workers

So we can stay where we are

Everyone Deserves Care

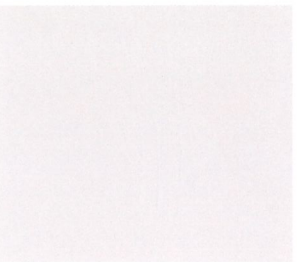
At the place they chose to call home

To be with family and people who care.



This poem by JT describes the fear of life without support from direct care workers.

I am in support
of taking action to
make nursing services
& direct support care
services readily
available for
individuals w/
disabilities.



Attn Mark Romandak

Senate Building 1 Capital Sq
Ground Floor
049

Columbus OH

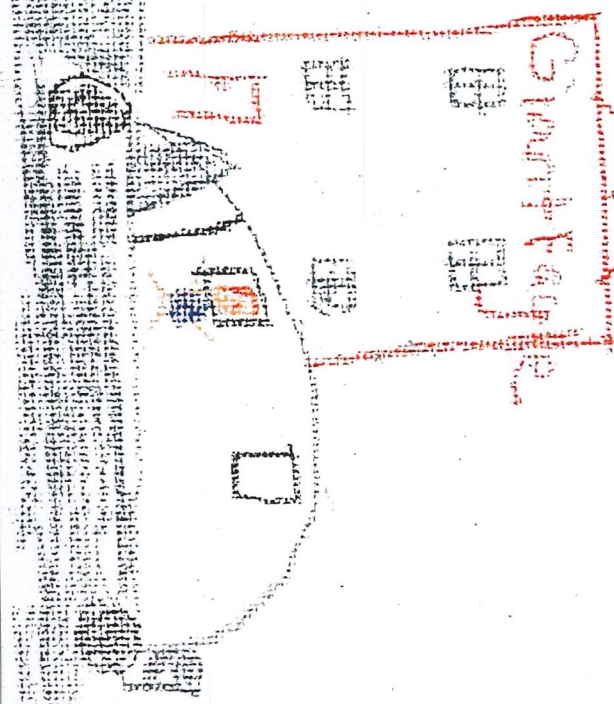
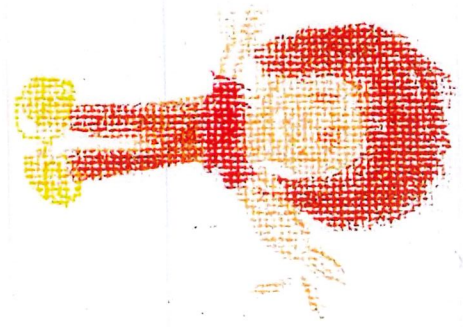
43215



The



Spore



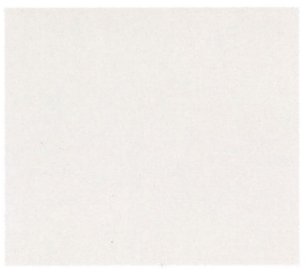
This painting by Courtney depicts what life feels like with full support from direct care workers.

Dear Legislators!

Our families are in crisis without direct support professionals!

Please increase wages for these amazing workers - our families need quality care-takers for their loved ones!

Janet Hayes, SSA @GABOS



Four horizontal lines for writing.