**Testimony on SFY 26/27 Operating Budget**

**Senate Medicaid Committee**

Good morning, Chair Romanchuk, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and committee members.

Thank you for letting me speak to you today.

My name is [**Name**]. I am [**a parent/family member of a person with a disability OR a person with a disability**] and [**I/my family member**] receive[**s**] Home and Community Based (HCBS) services through one of Ohio’s Developmental Disabilities waivers. I'm here to talk about why it's important to keep investing in these services and the people who provide them.

Before you increased funding in the last budget, it was hard to find people to help [**me/my family**]. [**Tell a brief, specific story. For example:** \* "My son needs help getting dressed and ready in the morning. For months, we couldn't find anyone to do it. I had to miss work."\* OR \* "I need someone to help me with grocery shopping and cooking. When my worker quit, I was on a waiting list for six months."\* ] Because there weren't enough workers, [**Explain what happened. For example:** \* "My son wasn't getting the care he needed."\* OR \* "I couldn't eat healthy meals and felt isolated."\* ]

Since you increased the funding, things have gotten better. [**Give 2-3 quick examples using simple words. For example:** \* "We found a wonderful caregiver for my son."\* OR \* "I now have someone to help me with errands, and I'm eating better."\* OR \* "More workers are available, so we don’t have to worry so much."\* ] These changes have made a real difference in [**my life/our lives**]. Thank you for taking action to fix this problem.

I'm worried because the Governor's proposed budget doesn't include more money for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) working in waiver settings. If you don't act, the workers who provide these services won't get the support they need for years. This means we could end up with the same crisis we just solved. We can't let that happen again.

**I ask you to:**

1. **Include a rate increase for DSPs in waiver settings.**
2. **Create a system to regularly adjust pay so we don't face this crisis again.**

These services are essential for people like [**me/my family member**]. We need to make sure people with disabilities always get the support they need.

(Signature)

(name

Email address

address

phone)