

July 21, 2015

Honorable Governor Kasich

Senator Oelslager

Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Senator Skindell

Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee

Representative Smith

Chair, House Finance Committee

Representative Driehaus

Ranking Member, House Finance Committee

Senator Burke

Chair, Senate Medicaid Committee

Senator Cafaro

Ranking Member, Senate Medicaid Committee

Representative Sprague

Chair, House Finance, HHS Subcommittee

Representative Sykes

Ranking Member, House Finance HHS Subcommittee

Dear Governor Kasich and Senators Oelslager, Skindell, Burke, and Cafaro, and Representatives Smith, Driehaus, Sprague, and Sykes:

We the undersigned organizations write to express our appreciation and gratitude to you for hearing our concerns, valuing our participation, and ultimately removing the misguided amendments to Revised Code § 5123.62 from H.B. 64 (the state biennium budget bill for fiscal years 2016-2017).

The controversial amendments to the “DD Bill of Rights” that were discussed during the budget process would have made significant changes to essential rights of Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities without adequate opportunity for those Ohioans to fully participate in the legislative process. As we approach the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is only fitting that during the budget process you heard the call of thousands of people with disabilities who asked you to recognize a simple phrase that conveys a powerful message - “nothing about us without us.”

Indeed, you have honored the spirit of and value for the full participation and inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by ensuring that the DD Bill of Rights will remain intact. Should changes be sought, there must be ample opportunity for direct and meaningful input by those most affected: people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Thank you again for your time and efforts on this important matter.

[Cosigners follow on next page]

Very truly yours,

Michael Kirkman, Disability Rights Ohio
Carolyn Knight, Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council
Ilka Riddle, University of Cincinnati, UCEDD
Marc Tasse, Ph.D., The Ohio State University Nisonger Center, UCEDD
Gary Tonks, The Arc of Ohio
Sadie Hunter, People First of Ohio
Karla Rinto, Advocacy & Protective Services, Inc.
Kay Grier, Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council
Dana Charlton, Ohio Self-Determination Association
Shelley Papenfuse, Ohio Olmstead Task Force
Shari Cooper, Advocacy United

cc: Honorable Keith Faber, President Ohio Senate
Honorable Cliff Rosenberger, Speaker Ohio House of Representatives
Honorable Joe Schiavoni, Minority Leader, Ohio Senate
Honorable Fred Strahorn, Minority Leader, Ohio House of Representatives

