



Disability Rights Ohio
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Michael Kirkman, Esq.
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November 21, 2014

Via Email to Kevin.Miller@ood.ohio.gov
Kevin Miller, Director
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
150 E. Campus View Blvd.
Columbus, Ohio 43235

Dear Kevin,

As you know, Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) is the federally designated Client Assistance Program for people with disabilities in the state of Ohio. Our mission is to advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights for people with disabilities in Ohio, including their right to seek vocational rehabilitation services and ultimately employment opportunities in the community.

As the 130th Ohio General Assembly comes to a close and the administration's focus turns towards finalizing its upcoming biennial budget recommendations, DRO writes to convey our interest in working with you to enhance the experience of individuals with disabilities when interacting with or seeking services from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD).

To this end, DRO strongly encourages you to advocate for the disability community during the budget process. OOD is seen as a strong voice within the administration for the employment and job-training interests of individuals with disabilities. We urge you to amplify your efforts, and to use your position effectively to improve services for Ohioans with disabilities.

Specifically, we encourage you to seek full funding for OOD. Historically, Ohio fails to take advantage of all of the federal resources that are available because it does not provide sufficient state dollars for the required match. This practice must stop because it limits opportunities for individuals seeking Vocational Rehabilitation services. I know that there were steps taken to address this issue in the last biennial budget, and hope that those gains can be further realized until Ohio reaches the goal of maximizing its use of all available federal resources.

Additionally, DRO strongly encourages you to consider establishing a state rehabilitation council (SRC) as defined in federal law. A fully functioning SRC would allow for greater participation and broader representation of the disability community's interests within OOD. Moreover, by establishing an SRC you would remove any doubt that Ohio is in compliance with federal law

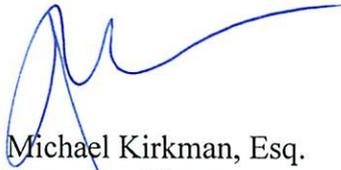
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with respect to the independent commission advising OOD. In past conversations you have stated that you would be open to discussing the establishment of an SRC – we see the upcoming biennial budget process as a vehicle to begin this discussion.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, or to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I wish you and your family the best of holidays.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Kirkman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Kirkman, Esq.
Executive Director