



December 12, 2022

Dear Ohio Legislators and the Office of Governor Mike DeWine:

Governor Mike DeWine has declared Ohio a “Disability Inclusion” state. We believe this should extend to the legislative process. Approximately 1 in 4 adults in Ohio have a disability, so it is crucial that our voices are heard.

With this in mind, we want to draw your attention to recent experiences that have contributed to the exclusion of the voices of people with disabilities in legislative spaces.

- People with disabilities often rely on transportation and accommodation services that must be booked in advance. Thus, when legislative committees change times at the last minute, people with disabilities are unable to participate and may even suffer financial consequences if they must cancel a service.
- When legislative committees meet early in the day it prohibits people who receive care in the mornings from being able to attend.
- The denial of reasonable accommodation requests to testify virtually excludes those who are not able to attend in person due to transportation access, health needs, or other reasons related to disability status. People who live in ICFs, group homes, or nursing homes are more likely to be excluded when virtual testimony is not accepted.

Furthermore, while nondisabled parents and allies have valid and important perspectives, it is imperative that the voices of people with disabilities be treated with equal respect.

People with disabilities who show up to testify should not be seen as “outliers” or “exceptions.”

Regardless of what supports we need or how we communicate, we deserve to be a part of making the decisions that impact us — whether that’s in our private lives relating to tasks of daily living or in a committee hearing room relating to statewide policy.

If you have any follow up questions, please reach out to ohioolmstead@gmail.com

Thank you for your time,

Renee Wood, Chair of the Ohio Olmstead Task Force

Alexia Kemerling, Vice Chair of the Ohio Olmstead Task Force