

Dear Representative

On behalf of the Hamilton County Board of Developmental Disabilities (HCDDS), I ask you to support amendment HC1093, sponsored by Representative Robert Sprague. This amendment appropriates the dollars lost through HB64's proposed Tangible Personal Property Tax (TPPT) phase-out into a Department of Developmental Disabilities budget line item. These funds would be used exclusively to fund Medicaid waiver services for people with developmental disabilities through the county board system.

As introduced, the TPPT phase-out will cause the loss of more than \$35 million a year to Ohio 77 county boards of DD. It is important to note that the loss to the DD system is actually much greater because of the loss of federal matching funds. Local property tax dollars raised by boards of DD through our county levies are unique in that they can be used to draw down federal Medicaid matching funds. Each dollar in TPPT brings \$1.67 of federal funds back to Ohio. **In Hamilton County we would lose \$2.215 million from the TPPT phase-out, a total loss of more than \$5 million for services to Hamilton County residents with DD.**

The taxpayers of Hamilton County overwhelmingly approved the DD services levy renewal in May 2014 that provides more than 70% of our operating budget. However, this renewal only maintains our funding at the level it has been for the past decade. At the same time the number of people with DD, and the need for services to help them become more independent and self-sufficient have continued to increase unabated. We have already explored and implemented every measure of efficiency and consolidation open to us. We could not absorb these further budget cuts without cutting necessary services.

To make up for the loss of TPPT funds, we would need to ask county taxpayers for an additional 0.12 mills. The county commissioners will not approve such a request for an additional local tax burden, even if it is required just to maintain our current level of services.

The proposed biennial budget has a considerable investment in the DD services at the state level to promote the changes toward community integration required under Employment First and the new rules from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. We support the intent of this action, but the concurrent losses at the local level caused by the TPPT phase-out will offset this investment and undermine the ability of the communities tasked with supporting integration to actually provide the services.

Therefore, given the substantial loss of services to people with developmental disabilities that could result from the phase-out of TPPT in HB64, I ask you to support the amendment proposed by Representative Sprague (HC1093). This amendment would appropriate \$16,252,000 in FY 2016 & \$24,304,000 in FY 2017, and would ensure that people with developmental disabilities served by county boards are not adversely impacted by this phase-out in HB64.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. I will follow-up with your office via phone in the coming days to discuss this amendment. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Cindy Molloy

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