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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

Monday, November 6, 2017

Ralph Kletzien
President
Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities
2606 Brady Lake Rd.
Ravenna, OH 44266

Dear Mr. Kletzien

While we know that the Portage County Developmental Disabilities Board and the Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) are locked in tough negotiations that resulted in a strike of the skilled staff, we also know that both parties care about the clients and their families your organization proudly serves. With this shared commitment in mind, we ask both parties to quickly return to the bargaining table, resolve your differences, and find a path forward towards a fair agreement.

We, either directly or through our staff, have spoken with both sides engaged in negotiations. Perhaps even more importantly, we also heard from a few of the parents of constituents served by the Board and its SSAs during a meeting convened by our offices. The stories shared by parents during this conversation were powerful and courageous. There is no doubt that this dispute is having significant impacts on families who consistently overcome challenges, large and small, to support their loved ones.

As the strike quickly approaches the one month mark, we urge both sides to get back to the table and stay there until a new agreement is reached that can be ratified by both parties.

Please consider the impact on the families in your community and make a public commitment to reopen the lines of communication with the SSAs to successfully bargain a new contract and bring an end the strike. In doing so, both sides will allow Portage County families served by the Board to return their attention to what matters most—caring for and supporting their loved ones.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Kathleen Clyde
Ohio House of Representatives