



445 Hutchinson Avenue, Suite 700
Columbus, OH 43235
P (614) 444-2882 | F (614) 444-2974
LeadingAgeOhio.org

**House Bill 279 Testimony of Susan Wallace
President and CEO, LeadingAge Ohio
House Ways and Means Committee
May 20, 2026**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 279. My name is Susan Wallace, and I serve as President and CEO of LeadingAge Ohio, a statewide association representing nonprofit, mission-driven providers of aging services across Ohio.

LeadingAge Ohio strongly supports House Bill 279 and appreciates Representatives Mathews and Williams for advancing legislation that recognizes the essential role family caregivers play in Ohio's long-term care system.

Across Ohio, millions of family caregivers provide unpaid support that allows older adults and people with disabilities to remain safely in their homes and communities. These caregivers assist with transportation, meals, medications, mobility, finances, and countless daily needs while often balancing employment and caregiving responsibilities of their own. While much attention is paid to the role our health care system has in supporting older adults, the truth of the matter is that over 80 percent of care is delivered not by providers and agencies, but by family caregivers.

The financial impact is significant. Many caregivers pay out-of-pocket for home modifications, respite care, assistive technology, transportation, and in-home supports that help a loved one remain independent. House Bill 279 offers practical relief by creating a tax credit tied directly to those caregiving expenses.

This legislation also supports the broader aging services system. Family caregiving reduces strain on hospitals, nursing facilities, home care providers, and the necessarily limited direct care workforce. Supporting caregivers helps older Ohioans remain at home longer while helping caregivers stay connected to the workforce themselves.

Finally, Ohio is unique in that we have neglected to promote policies that support family caregiving. Ohio lags behind 40 states in the supportive policies that we offer family caregivers,

according to AARP's Long-term Services and Supports Scorecard. This bill is a meaningful step towards closing that gap, offsetting the everyday caregiving expenses for families carrying these responsibilities.

LeadingAge Ohio respectfully urges the committee to favorably report House Bill 279. Thank you for your consideration.