



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Rep. LaTourette, Portage DD Superintendent Talk Disability Policy, Funding**

CHESTERLAND, Ohio – Ohio State Representative Sarah LaTourette, R-Chesterland, met with leaders of the Portage and Geauga County Boards of Developmental Disabilities Monday to discuss disability policy ahead the upcoming two-year state budget process and toured board offices and facilities.

The meeting, which was held at the Geauga County Board of DD offices, was attended by LaTourette, Portage County Board of DD Superintendent Gina Brown, and Geauga County Board of DD Superintendent Don Rice. The two boards collectively provide services and supports to more than 1,700 people in Northeast Ohio.

LaTourette learned more about the supports county boards of DD provide and got a first-hand look at the assistive devices and services that help people with developmental disabilities communicate and live more independently.

“Serving our state for over 50 years, Ohio’s system of county boards of developmental disabilities has an outstanding record of meeting the needs of individuals within the developmental disabilities community,” LaTourette said. “I am greatly appreciative of our county boards for taking the time to help me learn more about such a vital community resource.”

Supports for Ohioans with developmental disabilities are funded by a combination of local, state and federal dollars. Much of the state’s portion of that funding is decided every two years during Ohio’s biennial budget process, during which lawmakers draw up the state’s two-year spending plan. The 2020-21 state budget will be written in the first half of 2019.

“I appreciate Representative LaTourette taking the time to meet with us today to discuss the needs of the individuals with developmental disabilities here in Portage County,” Brown said. “Establishing an open line of communication now with the state legislature guarantees the people we serve here in Portage County have a voice in government.”

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PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF  
**DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**  
CREATING COMMUNITY

Our mission is to assist individuals in developing their abilities to achieve a life as active members of our community

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Brown and Rice also spoke to LaTourette about state funding for DD programs, community transportation, and the ongoing statewide shortage of direct service professionals (DSPs) to care for people with developmental disabilities in home and community-based settings.

LaTourette represents Ohio's 76th House District, which includes most of Geauga County and the northern portion of Portage County. She is serving her second term in the Ohio House. She is a resident of Chesterland.

The Portage County Board of DD supports more than 900 Portage County residents with developmental disabilities, including nearly 100 infants, more than 300 school age children, and more than 450 adults.

County boards offer a variety of supports for people with developmental disabilities, including early intervention, school age services, and employment services. Established 50 years ago by the Ohio General Assembly, Ohio's 88 county boards of DD now support more than 93,000 people with developmental disabilities.

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