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Cuyahoga County Board of DD Announces Two New Board Members

Cuyahoga County Executive Ronayne Appoints Dennis Roberts and Derek Topola to Cuyahoga DD's Governing Board

CLEVELAND, Ohio –February 12, 2026– Tuesday night, Cuyahoga County Council confirmed Dennis Roberts and Derek Topola to the Board of the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (Cuyahoga DD). Mr. Roberts replaces Lisa M. Hunt, who served three terms on Cuyahoga DD's Board, and Mr. Topola replaces Mozelle T. Jackson, who served two terms. Mr. Topola's appointment makes Cuyahoga DD the largest County Board statewide with two governing board members who receive services from a Board of Developmental Disabilities (DD).

Of Cuyahoga DD's seven board members, two are appointed by Cuyahoga County Probate Court, and five are appointed by the Cuyahoga County Executive, with approval of the Cuyahoga County Council. Both Roberts's and Topola's appointments were under the County Executive and County Council's jurisdiction.

"I am excited about the unique talents Dennis and Derek will bring to Cuyahoga DD's governing board," said Dr. Amber C. Gibbs, Cuyahoga DD Superintendent & CEO.

"Dennis's perspective as a parent of a young person with disabilities and Derek's perspective as a person who receives Cuyahoga DD services will be invaluable as we continue to deliver on our mission of supporting and empowering people with developmental disabilities to live, learn, work, and play in our community."

"My interest in this role is professional and deeply personal," Mr. Roberts said. "I will approach this role with care, humility, and a willingness to listen, drawing on both my professional experience and my personal experience as a parent of a daughter with a developmental disability."

"I hope to be a voice for the DD community and to serve as a reminder that when you put your mind to something, you can accomplish it through hard work and determination," Mr. Topola said. "I look forward to bringing my experience to the table to support people with disabilities in a bigger way."

About Dennis Roberts

Dennis Roberts is Chief Strategy Officer of the Cuyahoga Land Bank, where he oversees key organizational initiatives that drive community growth and plays a central role in shaping the Land Bank's long-term vision and expanding its impact across the region.

A licensed attorney and real estate agent, Dennis brings legal insight, hands-on development experience, and policy fluency. In his free time, Dennis serves as a board member of Solutions at Work (SAW), a private nonprofit dedicated to providing employment and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Dennis lives in Lakewood with his wife, Sabrina, and their daughter, Morgan. She has a developmental disability (DD) and remains a central source of inspiration for Dennis' commitment to inclusive, community-centered development.

About Derek Topola

Derek Topola is a substitute teacher for the Independence and Brecksville-Broadview Heights School District. In addition, he is a National Core Indicator (NCI) Surveyor at The Ohio State Nisonger Center, a federally funded University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

Outside of his work in local schools and at the Nisonger Center, Derek has served as the President of Cuyahoga DD's Leadership Council since 2023. The Leadership Council works collaboratively across Cuyahoga DD departments and provides directors with the perspective of people living with disabilities on programs and initiatives that will affect services for people with DD. The Leadership Council participates in local and statewide advocacy and also advises community organizations on accessibility and inclusion issues.

About Cuyahoga DD

Cuyahoga DD supports and empowers people with developmental disabilities to live, learn, work, and play in the community and proudly serves 15,000 county residents from birth through adulthood. Cuyahoga DD is primarily supported by a property-tax levy last approved by voters in 2005. Learn more at www.CuyahogaDD.org.

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