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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Rep. Goyal Honored By Statewide Agency For Work Helping Those With Disabilities**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A legislator from Central Ohio was honored as the “legislator of the year” by a statewide organization that supports all 88 *County Boards of Developmental Disabilities* in providing services and supports to individuals with disabilities.

State Representative Jay Goyal was introduced to the more than 600 participants at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual *Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) of Developmental Disabilities CONVENTION* by Gabe Desantis, a *Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities* Board member who also serves as an *OACB* trustee. Liz Prather, *superintendent of Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities*, also helped in the presentation.

The “legislator of the year” award is presented annually to an elected or appointed official who exhibits high accomplishments in legislative leadership for people with developmental disabilities.

While thanking the *OACB* and crowd for the honor, Representative Goyal then turned the tables on the group. “I want to say thank you to everyone in this room for everything you do to help people with developmental disabilities,” Representative Goyal said. “It’s all of you in this room who do all the work to help our most vulnerable citizens.”

In his introduction, Mr. DeSantis, who has been retired for 10 years, pointed out a person has to look at Representative Goyal’s accomplishments in context. “Representative Goyal just went to his 10-year high school reunion, and while in high school, was voted class president four straight years, and also was voted ‘most likely to become a politician’ while in high school” in Mansfield, Mr. DeSantis said.

Today, he holds a leadership position in the Ohio House of Representatives as Majority Whip.

“Leadership has nothing to do with age and everything to do with ability,” said Mrs. Prather. “Jay makes sure he understands his constituents’ issues and needs. He attends functions, and he has always been there for us,” she said.

“Representative Goyal has demonstrated time and time again that one of his priorities is making certain that funding and other legislative matters are secured for people with developmental disabilities,” said Dan Ohler, *OACB* Executive Director.

“It is our pleasure to honor Representative Goyal for his hard work. We appreciate the time and respect he shows not only individuals with developmental disabilities, but those of us who work to enhance the lives and opportunities of the disabled,” Ohler said.

State Representative Goyal’s legislative district is Richland County.

All 88 *County Boards of MRDD* in Ohio are members of the *OACB* whose purpose is to educate and advocate for the more than 80,000 individuals with developmental disabilities who reside in the Buckeye State.

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**CAPTION: State Representative Jay Goyal was awarded the “legislator of the year” honor at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual *OACB* Convention. Pictured are *Richland County Board of Developmental Disabilities*’ Superintendent Liz Prather, *Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities* Director John Martin, State Representative Jay Goyal, Richland County Board Member Jim Hull, *OACB* Executive Director Dan Ohler, and Gabe DeSantis, *OACB* Trustee and Richland County Board Member.**