



Testimony Regarding the Volunteer Register of Persons having a Communication Disability

Ohio House Community and Family Advancement Committee

March 29, 2017



Chairman Ginter, Vice-Chairwoman Conditt, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Community and Family Advancement Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 115. My name is Steve Beha. I am the sibling of a brother and the father of a son who both could benefit from the passage of this bill. I am also here representing The Arc of Ohio which is a statewide association made up of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, friends, interested citizens and professionals in the disability field. Together with our individual members and local chapters, we represent more than 330,000 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as their families.

The Arc of Ohio is a supporter of this legislation and is honored to endorse this bill which will assist those who we represent when they interact with the various law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

HB 115 will greatly assist families of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially those those who may need assistance to communicate with other people whom they may not know. The creation of a database with persons who voluntarily register as being diagnosed with a communication disability will allow families of children and adults the ability to provide information of a potential communication barrier to law enforcement officers prior to approaching the individual. We trust that prior knowledge of needed communication assistance in unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations will be a valuable resource for law enforcement officers to utilize.

The voluntary nature of this registry coupled with the stipulation that information in the database is not a public record, will ensure the privacy of individuals' information and only allow law enforcement officers accessing the Law Enforcement Automated Data System to be notified of the needed communication assistance.

The Arc of Ohio applauds the intent of this bill and the concern it shows for our loved ones.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Beha'.

Steve Beha
The Arc of Ohio
Associate Director