

Mark Sommer
4389 N. Opfer-Lentz Rd.
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Re: Testimony of Mark Sommer in support of House Bill 115 to Create register of persons having a communication disability before the 132nd General Assembly.

Representative Gavarone, Representative Wiggam and other distinguished committee members, I want to thank you for this opportunity to address HB-115.

I urge you to pass this important legislation. As a person who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease almost one year ago I am strongly in favor of this bill. When I first found out about my diagnoses, I immediately started researching the progression of the disease and how it would affect my daily life, both socially and professionally. I was surprised to find out of the difficulties and misunderstanding of some symptoms associated with Parkinson's. A brief search of the internet will show many instances of where a Parkinson's patient will have their symptoms misinterpreted as being intoxicated. There are many examples of employer's accusing workers of being drunk on the job and being threatened with termination. And sadly, the same search turns up stories of people being accused of intoxication by law enforcement officers. These examples range from people being confronted while walking or driving and without the knowledge of the patient's condition, the officer assumes they are under the influence. Some examples end up violently, some of these cases even occurred here in Ohio.

I feel this bill would provide law enforcement knowledge in advance and hopefully go a long way in helping to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to all Ohio residents. I would be happy to discuss this topic further and provide additional commentary if it would be helpful in your decision making process. I can be reached at (419) 320-0732 or via email at msom22@gmail.com. Thank you again for your attention to this issue.

Mark Sommer
President / CEO
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