

Testimony HB621

To House Members,

My name is Catherine Clark. My husband, detective Robert James Clark, was shot 4 times and killed on July 1, 1998 while working for the Cleveland police department. He was 36 years old. Our children were 2, 5, and 7. I was 33, legally blind and was living with Type I, childhood diabetes. On July 1st in the afternoon I said goodbye to my husband as he left to go to work. A few hours later, I was at Metro hospital, looking at his lifeless bullet riddled body. Within days, I was walking up to his casket with 3 small children.

There are no words to describe the devastation we experienced or the never-ending pain that comes with such a traumatic loss. Through the years I was able to provide a middle-class lifestyle for my children and take care of my health issues until December 2016 when my income was drastically cut. With my son in college, my 2 daughters pursuing higher education, my inability to work do to growing health issues, and the loss of income, I had no choice to sell our home. I felt like a failure as a mother as I watched my son cry as we left the house for the last time. That house held happy memories that I worked so hard to build and it represented normalcy and security. Currently as all 3 of my children are pursuing their degrees and working at part time, low paying jobs, they still require financial assistance from me. I do what I can but If their father was alive, he would still be working to help them.

As we approach January 2019, my son and I will lose our health benefits. Though I will receive a stipend, it will not be sufficient to cover my expensive medical needs. I have had Type I, childhood diabetes for 52 of my 53 years. It is a systemic disease and affects all major organs and systems of the body. I have several different specialists, including 3 different eye doctors, an endocrinologist, neurologist, ENT doctor, rheumatologist and more. I take 17 different prescription medications. I wear a continual glucose monitor and use a CPAP machine. I need these doctors, medications, and medical devices to stay alive and I certainly will not be able to maintain my health and level of care as of January 1,2019.

My hope is to live long enough to see all 3 of my children graduate, established in their carriers, attend their weddings, and see at least one of my grandchildren. The longest I can expect to live is approximately another 15 years but if I lose my health insurance, I won't make it.

Rob gave up his life protecting others. If my husband was alive today he would be 56 and working. He loved us and would take care of us. Every day for 20 years, we have felt his loss. I am asking you to support this bill. The difference it would make it our lives would be significant. For me it is life or death.

Sincerely,

Catherine Clark