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State Senator Bill Beagle
Senate Bill 27 Sponsor Testimony
Ohio House of Representatives State and Local Government Committee
March 17, 2017

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, and Ranking Member Bishoff, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 27.

Senate Bill 27 would designate the period beginning March 13 and ending April 15 as “Ohio Deaf History Month.” The idea behind designating this time period as Ohio Deaf History Month was brought to my attention by constituents affiliated with the Citizens of Deaf Cultures group who were seeking assistance to raise awareness about individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their proud history and culture.

This time period was selected to commemorate two historical moments in the Deaf Culture. On March 13, 1988, I. Jordan King was elected as the first deaf president of Gallaudet University. Before this date, Gallaudet University, the first school for the advanced education of the deaf and hard of hearing in the world, had never selected a deaf individual as its president. On April 15, 1817, the United States established its first permanent Deaf School, the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, now the American School for the Deaf in Hartford Connecticut.

In closing, my sister teaches American Sign Language, and has increased my awareness of issues specific to the Deaf Culture. Designating a “Deaf History Culture Month” would give advocates an opportunity to focus efforts on celebrating its history and culture and improve awareness.

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, and Ranking Member Bishoff, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 27. I am happy to take questions at this time.