

Written Testimony of Kimberly Savage

Ohio SB 27 Hearing Given at the Ohio House of Representatives

March 28, 2017

My name is Kimberly Savage and thank you for the opportunity to have my testimony given at this hearing to support Ohio Senate Bill 27 on Ohio Deaf History Month. I'm President of Buckeye Black Deaf Advocates (BBDA) Columbus Chapter. I would like to say a little about my past. I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and moved to Columbus, Ohio 1986 because I realized that Columbus' Deaf Community had better resources for the deaf through its state school for the deaf. When I was in the Deaf Program in Cleveland, my family knew nothing about the Deaf. Nothing about its history. I did not know that there were famous Deaf Blacks such as Andrew Foster who went to Africa in 1956 and set up more than 30 schools for the Deaf in Ghana, Mali, Kenya and Congo. I did not know that another Black Deaf woman named Shirley Allen was the first Black Deaf woman to earn a Ph.D. degree in Education.

In 1988, I learned about an organization called National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA). I attended NBDA event in Chicago and learned a lot about black deaf culture and awareness of progress in Black Deaf America. One is Miss Black Deaf America Pageant.

In 1997, Black Deaf Advocates was set up in Columbus but years later it was not active. Almost 5 years ago, I worked on BDA back to active in Columbus. My

thanks goes to Chuck Williams, founder of Black Deaf Advocates, Cleveland Chapter, who taught me to be resourceful and not giving up.

I feel strongly that young deaf children of any color have the right to know that there are education resources for them and they also have a future. They can come to our BBDA with their families and learn about our organization through workshops. They need to grow through participation in our community and have meaningful experiences.

I strongly believe that SB 27 will help Ohio's Deaf Black Citizens become more aware of their culture and embrace their Black Deaf Heritage. Please support SB 27 for Ohio Deaf History Month. Thank you for listening to my testimony.