

Honorable Marlene Anielski
Chair, House State and Local Government Committee
77 S. High St
Columbus, OH 43215

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Cassandra McDonald, and I am here on behalf of the L.A.W.R.S. Foundation. I am asking you today to support House Bill 300 in an effort to improve the quality of life for those considered permanently disabled.

It is imperative that we identify and address the hardships that individuals with disabilities face on a regular basis. Something as simple as a Driver's License or State Issued identification card can hinder those with disabilities from performing both their personal and professional business.

For instance, working in a social service capacity, I advocated for individuals who were physically disabled. They relied on medical transportation assistance through the government, or the regional transit authorities to take them around to do what we so freely do for ourselves on a regular basis. Those things included, grocery shopping, healthcare visits, even driver's license and state identification renewals. More often than not, I would have clients that would have expired identification cards, some even greater than 6 months because they could not get a ride to the bureau of motor vehicles.

Even more so, they could not receive services sometime for free food, clothing, housing, etc., because in order to be serviced, they had to have a valid Ohio identification card. You would be surprised at how an expired identification card could cause such hardship for our disabled citizens.

HB 300 is necessary. The goal of any family, organization, healthcare facility, and/or government agency is to make those with permanent disabilities live as independently as possible. This Bill would create a support mechanism that would prevent individuals with problems with mobility from losing life-sustaining assistance from food banks, housing, utility, food and medical programs from being denied services simply because they have an expired identification card.

As a former manager of a social service agency, I saw first hand parents and individuals who could not get help with something as fundamental as food, get turned away simply because of an expired identification. Something as simple as an expired identification card, with no way to get around because of the expired card, keep a family of 3 from eating?

Ohio should set the pace when it comes to providing better socioeconomic opportunities for all citizens; even more so, our permanently disabled. HB 300 will do just that. Just as our senior citizens, we have to be concerned with advocating for those that too often, many people forget.

I am again asking you with all sincerity that HB 300 is adopted in the best interest of humanity. Thank you all for allowing me to speak on this very important issue.