

Linda and Raymond Hoetger
House Bill 570 Proponent Testimony
June 6th, 2018

Thank you Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton and Ranking Member Sheehy. I am honored to give my testimony today for the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee in support of H.B. 570. H.B. 570 would create a special Ohio license plate to raise awareness for the one in nine men who will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

My name is Linda Hoetger and on June 19, 2009, my life forever changed when my husband Ray and I were given the devastating news that Ray had an aggressive form of prostate cancer. However, I was not about to sit back and do nothing! I started advocating and raising awareness for this horrible disease that no one seems to want to talk about. In 2012, I began working with ZERO – The End of Prostate Cancer, a national nonprofit with the mission to end prostate cancer. ZERO advances research, improves the lives of men and families, and inspires action.

Working with ZERO has given me so many more opportunities to help raise awareness and to be part of ending prostate cancer. Each year Ray and I speak to our elected officials at the Annual ZERO Prostate Cancer Summit in Washington, D.C., and work locally in Ohio to secure proclamations from each local government declaring September as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

I support H.B. 570 because prostate cancer, despite being the most diagnosed non-skin cancer in men, and the second deadliest, is seldom talked about. Raising awareness for prostate cancer is so important because, if caught early, prostate cancer has a 99.9% five-year survival rate. However, if not caught in time, that survival rate drops to roughly 30%. Our nation's veterans are 1.5 times more likely to get diagnosed and African-American men are 2.3 times more likely to die from it. This year in Ohio alone, roughly 6,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and over 1,100 will die of this terrible disease.

Ray and I have been blessed to find that after difficult and emotionally draining five-year process of seemingly endless treatments, Ray's cancer is still undetectable. I support H.B. 570 because I do not want my four sons to have to go through this same fight at any point in their lifetime.

I'd like to again thank Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton and Ranking Member Sheehy for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of my husband Ray, my four sons, myself, and the one in nine men who will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime, I ask that you support H.B. 570 so that we can raise awareness of this awful disease in Ohio and do our part in ending prostate cancer once and for all.