

**ATTENTION: Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, and Ranking Member Schiavoni  
COMMITTEE: Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee  
TESTIMONIAL for November 29, 2017  
RE: SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 115**

**SENATE TESTIMONY FROM:**

**Cathy Ruiz,  
Parent Mentor, with Parent Mentors of Ohio Program  
Vice President, Executive Board, OCECD  
Service Coordinator, Paulding County Family & Children First Council  
Board of Directors, Westwood Behavioral Health Center, serving Paulding and Van Wert Counties  
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**HOUSE BILL 115 TESTIMONY – Cathy Ruiz, Parent Mentor:**

**I am writing today to express my full support of House Bill 115 which will protect persons being diagnosed with communication disabilities for the purposes of law enforcement notification.**

**Representative Theresa Gavarone (R-District Three) and Scott Wiggam (R-District One) are sponsoring House Bill 115.**

**I am the mother of an adult son who is 23 years old, and is Autistic. As a Parent Mentor with the Parent Mentors of Ohio Program, I provide supports and services to parents of children with special needs and to the school districts who serve them. I also serve on the Executive Board with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD).**

**From both a parent and professional perspective, I sincerely believe that those with communication disabilities having the choice to voluntarily submit the details of their disability is imperative to their safety. Our Law Enforcement have a tough job to do, and without the proper documentation of a communication disability, their job becomes much more difficult and the person with the disability is at risk.**

**The information would be accessible to law enforcement officers in the database of persons who voluntarily register as being diagnosed with a communication disability, with no labels on license plates or physical licenses. By having the ability to access the database, law enforcement officers would be immediately aware of communication disabilities when they make traffic stops for violation.**

**The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities is a non-profit organization dedicated to insuring that every child with disabilities is provided a free, appropriate public education, always striving to improve the quality of services for all children and youth with disabilities in Ohio. As a parent, a Parent Mentor, and as an Executive Board Member for the OCECD, this is my passion and goal on behalf of those with disabilities as well.**

**Thank you to Chair Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, and Ranking Member Schiavoni, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee for your consideration of this important issue, and the opportunity to submit my testimony to you in support of this bill. Also, Thank you so very much to Representative Gavarone and Representative Wiggam for sponsoring House Bill 115 and for protecting and improving the lives of those with disabilities in Ohio.**

**Sincerely,**



**Cathy Ruiz, Parent Mentor  
Vice President, Executive Board, The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities**