

November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Bacon, Chairman  
Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Bacon and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing today on behalf of the Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness to express our support for House Bill 309, sponsored by State Representative Anne Gonzales.

As you know, HB 309 would prohibit an individual's blindness from being the basis for denial of custody, limits on visitation, participation in adoption, or involvement in the foster care system. At its core, HB 309 addresses unfair biases that limit the ability of blind parents to raise their children and be caretakers.

As a leading patient advocate for Ohioans who are at risk for vision loss, we strongly believe that the individuals we serve should be treated equally under the law. This is especially true as it relates to child welfare, foster care, adoption, and family law. Clear evidence that blindness will impair an individual's ability to be a parent, guardian, or caretaker must be presented—HB 309 will create a level playing field and protect the rights of blind Ohioans.

It is important to note that more than 14 other states have passed similar laws and I believe that many more will follow suit. I strongly encourage the committee to favorably report HB 309 so that it can be signed by Governor Kasich this year.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Sherry Williams  
President and CEO  
Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate

---

**Mission: To Prevent Blindness and Preserve Sight**

Northeast Ohio Chapter • Hillcrest Medical Bldg. #1 • 6803 Mayfield Road, Suite 111 • Cleveland, Ohio 44124 • Phone: 440.720.1285 • Fax: 440.720.1441

Northwest Ohio Chapter • 2200 Jefferson Avenue, Suite 2020 • Toledo, Ohio 43604 • Phone: 419.327.2020 • Fax: 419.327.2494

Southwest Ohio Chapter • 615 Elsinore Place, Annex Bldg., Suite 2020 • Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 • Phone: 513.531.9001 • Fax: 513.531.9002

Dayton Office • 313 South Jefferson Street, Suite 104 • Dayton, Ohio 45402 • Phone: 937.223.8766 • Fax: 937.223.8767

Visit [www.pbohio.org](http://www.pbohio.org) or email [info@pbohio.org](mailto:info@pbohio.org)

Please remember Prevent Blindness Ohio in your will.