



Cincinnati Association for the
Blind & Visually Impaired

Proponent Testimony on H.B. 188
House Health Committee

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Chairman Lipps, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 188. The Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Cleveland Sight Center are private, non-profit agencies that serve Ohioans that are blind or have significant vision loss.

As proponents of House Bill 188, we ask for your support of this important piece of legislation which would prohibit a court or public children services agency from using a person's blindness as a reason to deny or limit that person's care for a minor. The bill protects against discrimination of an individual solely due to their blindness or vision loss when determining custody and visitation rights, when the individual is considering fostering or adoption, and when they are appointed as a guardian for a minor. Denying any of these rights due to an assumption that an individual with visual impairments is unable to adapt and live independently is unfair and should be prohibited.

Ohio's Sight Centers exist for this reason, to empower individuals with visual impairments to achieve independence. Services provided by the Sight Centers include orientation and mobility training, education and rehabilitative services, assistive technologies, counseling and recreation opportunities.

We would like to thank Representatives Crawley and Cross for introducing this bill. For far too long individuals that are blind or have low vision have felt abandoned by policy makers. This bill and others like House Bill 214 are extremely meaningful to those who are overcoming their vision loss. We ask for your support of this bill and encourage its swift passage.