



OHIO:

2031 Auburn Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45219
513/241-2600 VOICE
513/241-1707 FAX
cilo@cilo.net

KENTUCKY:

525 West Fifth Street
Suite 218
Covington, KY 41011
859/341-4346 VOICE
800/914-4647 TDD
859/341-1252 FAX

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**Proponent Testimony – House Health and Aging Committee
House Bill 365
January 20, 2016**

Chairwoman Gonzales, Vice-Chairman Huffman, Ranking-Member Antonio and members of the House Health and Aging Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 365.

I would also like to thank Representative Christie Kuhns and Representative Mark Romanchuk for cosponsoring this legislation.

Transportation is the lifeblood of society, and centers for independent living and other advocates across the state are working together to improve options for people with disabilities. Taxis provide an essential link to the community and other transit options; people who use mobility devices such as power wheelchairs, however, are excluded from using this service when accessible vehicles are not available. House Bill 365 will revise chapter 4766 of the Ohio Revised Code to clear an unnecessary legal barrier that governs accessible taxis as ambulettes, and makes them taxis more expensive to operate, and thereby less profitable.

There is a market and a need to transport people with disabilities that is being increasingly addressed in cities like Seattle, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Tampa. Ohio needs to move forward on this issue, which not only affects our disabled citizens' ability to work, play, shop and fully participate, but also limits the ability of tourists to come to our cities and patronize our businesses.

Municipalities already impose the majority of the taxi operator regulations. Cities and towns regulate taxis within their borders. They can require disability etiquette, ADA law, accessible transportation equipment training for licensing requirements, and inspections.

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services, can substantially lower the cost of publicly provided mass transit and other wheelchair accessible services, while providing a superior level of service at the same time.

I hope you will support HB 365 as a step towards transportation equity for people with disabilities.

Thank you Chairwoman Gonzales, Vice-Chairman Huffman, Ranking-Member Antonio and the members of the committee for allowing us to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 365. We would be happy to answer any questions from the committee at this time.

Kat Lyons
Advocacy Coordinator
klyons@cilo.net
513-241-2600