



Office of Representative John E. Barnes, Jr.

Thank you, Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes and my esteemed colleagues in the State and Local Government Committee for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 300.

House Bill 300 was inspired by constituents' involvement in local government. What we found is that many people who hold state nondriver identification cards are people who were either born blind or became permanently or irreversibly disabled as a result of an accident or illness.

The purpose for the renewal of these identification cards is to assure that their bearer's circumstances have not changed. But here's the situation! Currently under Ohio law, people who were born blind or have become permanently or irreversibly disabled must renew their state identification cards every 4 years. This is a costly proposition and the real challenge for these individuals is that they find themselves being asked to come into the Regional Transit Authority office to apply for an extension for paratransit serves in addition to other services which have expired. They then find themselves in the process of not being picked up for work. This practice does not pass the common sense test in Ohio and it is too costly.

This legislation will contribute significantly to enhancing the quality of life for those who were born blind or have become permanently or irreversibly disabled. It will:

1. amend sections 4507.50 and 4507.52 of the Revised Code to provide that any nondriver identification card that is issued to a resident of Ohio who is permanently or irreversibly disabled must be issued with a 15-year expiration date; and
2. exempt such cardholders who are also unemployed from the identification card fees.

The system needs to be kinder, and House Bill 300 will save disabled individuals time and money in addition to reducing red tape in government. Thank you again for this opportunity, I would be happy to answer any questions.