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PSYCHIATRIC  
PHYSICIANS  
ASSOCIATION

A District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association

*Dedicated to promoting the highest quality care for people with mental disorders and to serving the professional needs of Ohio's psychiatric physicians.*

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Jan. 29, 2018

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The Honorable Bill Coley, Chair  
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee  
Ohio Senate  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Coley,

On behalf of the more than one thousand physician members of the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association (OPPA) who specialize in psychiatry, we are writing to express our support for AM 1018 and, with its inclusion, our support for House Bill 115 which would establish a database through which people who choose to voluntarily register as having a communication disability could identify themselves to law enforcement officers.

AM 1018 would make certain that people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) would be able to seek inclusion in the database, if they chose to do so. PTSD is a serious psychiatric illness that affects many Ohioans who have lived through combat, physical or sexual abuse, rape, and other traumatic experiences. PTSD manifests with severe anxiety, hypervigilance, nightmares and flashbacks of trauma, irritability, rages, avoidance and isolation. Many individuals with PTSD experience symptoms that interfere with their ability to communicate with others.

The OPPA supports measures that enhance interactions between police and individuals with mental illness. Providing law enforcement with information on potential communication barriers, such as PTSD, will help to prevent unnecessary conflicts due to miscommunication, likely as a result of disability or mental illness.

We thank Representative Gavarone and Representative Wiggam for carrying this important legislation and for their willingness to work with our organization to ensure that those suffering from PTSD are able to be included in the database.

Sincerely,

Megan Testa, MD  
Chair, OPPA Government Relations Committee

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