

September 10, 2017

Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Ohio Senate  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: House Bill 8  
Proponent Statement

Chairman Uecker and Committee Members;

My family and I would like to thank Representative Hambley for introducing House Bill 8 and guiding it to passage in the House of Representatives, all other Sponsors for their support, the overwhelming support indicated in the passage by the Ohio House of Representatives, and this Committee for its consideration of this legislation.

On May 10, 2016, my eight-year-old son was riding on a school bus to Granger Elementary School, a school in Highland Local Schools (Medina County), when the school bus was involved in a minor traffic accident which led to no injuries. The Ohio Highway Patrol responded and completed a *Traffic Crash Report* (Local Report Number 52-0497-52) as required. As I am aware of the aggressiveness of the Trial Bar and Personal Injury Firms, I told with my wife that these firms would probably come to the bus stops to try to get clients because all of the minor's information surely would have to be protected by privacy laws.

We were quite shocked when we received in the mail two solicitations from Personal Injury Law Firms. I was even more horrified that in one of the solicitations the firm felt it necessary to include a page of the *Occupant/Witness Addendum* of the *Traffic Crash Report* that included the following information on my son and five other children:

Full Name  
Date of Birth  
Age  
Gender  
Full Address  
Phone Number

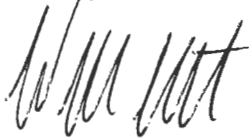
I thought for sure that some mistake must have been made to make this information available. I contacted the Highland School District to inquire how this information could be acquired. I was told that by law, the School District must provide this information to the law enforcement agency investigating the accident, but at no time would any information be provided to any other entity by the School District. Dawn Marzano, Communications Director for Highland Schools, contacted the Highway Patrol to determine under what circumstances would the personal information be made available. Ms. Marzano was told by the Highway Patrol, and she subsequently informed me, that a *Traffic Crash Report* is public record and must be provided in full if requested.

Upon hearing that this private information of children can be public record, I thought that it must be a mistake. I contacted the offices of both Representative Hambley and Senator Obhof and it was confirmed that there is no redaction allowed by law for the information of minors in a *Traffic Crash Report*. I felt that the law must be changed because if anyone can get this private information, what would stop criminals, identity thieves, pedophiles, and other people who would prey on children from getting this information.

Subsequent to the introduction of House Bill 8, I was informed that *Traffic Crash Reports* are available in a searchable database on the internet. Allowing this type of information to be available on the internet could lead to harm to children. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children publishes a pamphlet titled *Child Safety on the Information Highway*. The pamphlet indicates under Guidelines for Parents "Never give out identifying information – home address, school name, or telephone number – in public messages such as chat or bulletin boards (newsgroups)" on your children. House Bill 8 would give this choice back to parents what type of information that they would like to be available on the internet and other public records.

We are grateful that Representative Hambley has taken up this issue with House Bill 8, and our hope is for swift passage by your Committee and the full Senate so we can get a bill to Governor Kasich to make our state safer. While House Bill 8 should calm parent's anxieties about the privacy of their children, more importantly it will protect the privacy of my son and all other children in the state of Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Horton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "W".

William J Horton  
7179 Hartman Rd.  
Wadsworth, Ohio 44281  
wjh7179sc@gmail.com  
330-416-6445