November 5, 2019

Ohio House Health Committee

Proponent Testimony HB 188

Prohibit Blindness from Denying or Limiting Care of Minor Children

Submitted by: Annette Lutz

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the Ohio House Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB188. As a blind parent, I believe this legislation is vital to Ohio families and the children and parents that live with blindness. I am a blind mother of a grown blind daughter who someday would like to be a mother herself, and would like the opportunity to raise her children without the threat that I had to live with when she was growing up. On more than one occasion, I had to prove my abilities as a blind mother to good intentioned, yet ignorant social workers so I didn’t loose my child. Imagine the fear of a mother of a newly born infant when a stranger knocks at the door and tells you that someone reported you to Children’s Services because they were concerned about your ability to safely parent your child. This happened to me. I had to prove that I could carry my baby up and down the stairs without falling. I had to feed and change her in their presence, and I had to demonstrate everyday supervision to them, while being terrified that I wouldn’t pass the test in their uneducated opinion. Please consider passing this vital bill so that my daughter and her blind peers won’t have to live with the same threat, solely because they are blind.

Blindness is only an inconvenience, not a deterrent of parenting. Besides for being a blind parent, I was raised by two blind parents, who provided a safe and loving home for myself and my brother. Blindness should never be considered when making parenting decisions. Please do what you can to ensure that every blind person, whether they are a parent, or want to become a parent, has the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else.

Thank you for your consideration in this bill to protect the most basic of rights, the right to be a family.

Sincerely,

Annette Lutz

77 W. Jeffrey Pl.

Columbus, Ohio 43214

614-288-4323

annettelutz@att.net