

Ohio House Civil Justice Committee

October 4, 2021

Proponent Testimony HB352

Prohibit Blindness from denying or limiting care of minors

Submitted by Debra E. Baker

Constituent, Representative Koehler, 79th House District

Chair Hillyer, Vice-Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski and Members of Ohio House Civil Justice Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB352. As a member of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio and the greater National Federation of the Blind, I believe in the full capacity of blind people to care for minors.

I am not a parent. However, for 44 years, from 1977 to 2021, I continue to serve as a teacher of blind students grades K-12. In my profession I interact with parents, guardians and foster families who are either sighted or blind heads of household. In all instances, blind parents, guardians or foster care providers attended parent-teacher conferences twice yearly, attend their students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) team conferences, and sometimes volunteer in the school. The blind parents or guardians are conscientious about their children's educations since they could compare or contrast them to their own school experiences. Blind parents and guardians have been, in my professional experience, actively involved in their children's school lives.

The National Federation of the Blind of Ohio and the National Federation of the Blind believe that blindness should not be the exclusive, presumed measure to judge parental competence.

Thank you to the Committee for your support of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Debra E. Baker

1107 Burt Street

Springfield, Ohio 45505

Dgventure915@gmail.com

(937) 206-2935