



# Prevent Blindness

**Our Vision Is Vision.**

November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Honorable Brett Hillyer  
Chair, Civil Justice Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee—

I am writing today on behalf of Prevent Blindness Ohio to express our support for Senate Bill 202, legislation sponsored by State Senators Hackett and Antonio, which would protect the rights of parents and guardians who have a vision impairment.

As you know, SB 202 would generally prohibit a person's disability from being used as the sole factor in decisions surrounding custody, parenting time, visitation, adoption, or foster care. Various forms of this bill have been introduced in the past and have advanced in the legislative process. We are hopeful that SB 202 can finally get to the Governor's Desk and be enacted this year. PBO became interested in this issue after former State Representatives Anne Gonzales and Jeff Rezabek introduced HB 309 in the 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly to prohibit blindness or vision impairment from being factors in these decisions. While the bill has been broadened to include all disabilities, strong support remains among advocates for vision and blindness.

As a leading patient advocate for Ohioans who are at risk for vision loss, we strongly believe that the individuals we serve should be treated equally under the law. This is especially true as it relates to child welfare, foster care, adoption, and family law. Clear evidence that blindness will impair an individual's ability to be a parent, guardian, or caretaker must be presented—SB 202 will create a level playing field and protect the rights of blind Ohioans.

In closing, I would note that this committee already reported a companion measure, Representative Sharon Ray's House Bill 352, last year; that measure passed the full House 90-1 while SB 202 passed the Senate unanimously. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Pulles  
Chief Executive Officer  
Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate