

Testimony on House Bill 281

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman, Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Ohio Senate Health Committee. My name is Carmen Shelton, I live with a developmental disability, and I am advocate for people with disabilities. Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 281.

I am testifying today in support of House Bill 281. The language in the Ohio Revised Code must reflect person first language when referring to people with a disability and people with a mental impairment. For years people with disabilities and mental impairments have been marginalized and had low expectations placed on them. The current language in the Ohio Revised Code using words such as crippled, handicapped are words that have been used to describe my disability and are disrespectful, demeaning, and hurtful. These words place the focus solely on a disability and not a person. People first language such as a person with a disability, person who uses a wheelchair, or a person with a mental impairment reflect the person first, their value and worth. People first language must be used because all individuals have worth regardless of their disability.

Thank you again for your consideration of HB 281. I am glad to answer any questions you may have.