

HB 606 Sarah's Law for Seizure Safe Schools
Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Proponent Testimony
December 6, 2022

Chairman Brenner, Ranking Minority Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Education Primary and Secondary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on HB 606. My name is Dr. Crystal Hagans and I am the Executive Director of Epilepsy Foundation Ohio. In addition, I am a former educator of over 20 years and I have a sister living with epilepsy.

As our bill sponsors shared with you last week, HB 606 is designed to help students diagnosed with seizure disorders. In March 2015, Lyndsey Crunk experienced her first tonic clonic seizure in the shower, causing her to fall and receiving over 33 stitches in her ear. Shortly after her diagnosis, as they were just beginning to understand epilepsy and the broader effects, Lyndsey and her family became involved with the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana. In 2016, Lyndsey attended the Epilepsy Foundation's Teens Speak Up! & Public Policy Institute conference as the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana's teen representative, where she learned how to share her story with elected officials to create positive change for people affected by epilepsy. After returning home, Lyndsey became concerned that some teachers did not know seizure first aid. Lyndsey worked with her local Epilepsy Foundation office and the Kentucky legislature to develop legislation to address this problem. In 2018, Lyndsey led the charge in getting House Bill 147, also known as the Lyndsey Crunk Act, signed into law. Seizure safe school legislation has since been adopted in 16 states; Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Illinois, New Jersey, Virginia, Washington, Oklahoma, Colorado, Alabama, Nebraska, and Minnesota, Utah, Florida, Maryland, and Arizona. It is also pending in 5 other states.

Epilepsy is the fourth most common neurological disorder in the country and is characterized by unprovoked recurrent and unpredictable seizures which affect a variety of mental and physical functions. Epilepsy is a spectrum condition with a wide range of seizure types and control varying from person to person. For students living with epilepsy it is important to ensure that schools are well equipped with the tools necessary to provide a safe and enriching environment for students living with epilepsy and seizure disorders.

HB 606 Sarah's Law for Seizure Safe Schools makes certain that school personnel, including nurses, teachers, and volunteers, are not only prepared but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to the student experiencing a seizure. The bill requires a one-time training that can be completed either on-line or in-person, and the training is approximately 1 hour. This one time training is to occur within the first 12 months of the bill's effective date. The training can be provided free of charge by not-for-profit entities such as Epilepsy Foundation Ohio or the Epilepsy Alliance Ohio. For any school employees hired after the training is provided, they are to complete the training within the first 180 days of employment.

Even more importantly, the legislation safeguards physician-directed care in the school setting allowing students to access necessary and oftentimes life-saving medication. The bill will ensure a unified standard of care and response across the state of Ohio. The school nurse or in the case

where there is no school nurse another employee is to be designated to develop a Seizure Safe School Plan for any child diagnosed with a seizure disorder or epilepsy. The Plan is to be initiated by the parents and in coordination with the child's physician or health care provider. We have provided a sample plan for your reference. Once the plan is developed it is to be part of the student's file and shared with all of the school personnel or volunteers that work with the student throughout the day, including the bus driver. Lastly, by bringing awareness to the entire educational community, students living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder can feel safe in school, reach their full academic potential, and build meaningful friendships without fear of being stigmatized.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important legislation and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.