



Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities

To inspire, empower, and support people to achieve their full potential.

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 321

Kristine Hodge, Superintendent

Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities

February 7, 2024

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Homeland Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 321, also known as "Keith's Law." My name is Kristine Hodge, and I am the Superintendent of the Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities, which supports nearly 2400 people with developmental disabilities.

As someone who cares deeply about public safety and inclusion, I believe that this legislation is crucial in ensuring that individuals with special needs receive the best possible emergency response. Establishing an electronic statewide database will not only improve emergency response outcomes for individuals with special needs, but it will also alleviate the burden on local 9-1-1 centers. In Delaware County, many of our Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS agencies separately administer their own electronic databases, and registry information is not shared between them. The establishment of a statewide registry will make it easier for all first responders to access vital information, regardless of where an emergency may occur.

A statewide registry would also provide a greater sense of security for individuals with special needs and their families. Knowing that emergency personnel have access to essential information can reduce anxiety and stress during emergencies, improving outcomes.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support Keith's Law and help create a safer and more inclusive emergency response system so that all members of our community receive the best possible emergency response and care. Thank you for your time and consideration.