



REPRESENTATIVE CASEY WEINSTEIN
HOUSE DISTRICT 34

House Homeland Security Committee
HB 449 Sponsor Testimony
April 24, 2024

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the Homeland Security Committee: I am here today with my friend, colleague, and joint sponsor Representative Munira Abdullahi to testify for our bill, House Bill 449. This legislation would require the Digest of Motor Vehicle Laws to be translated into more languages. This bill is a critical step towards improving the quality of life of several families in Ohio.

Recently, we were made aware by our constituents that even though Ohio offers the Driver License Knowledge Test in 8 languages - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, Russian, Somali, and Spanish. - The Ohio Driver Manual is only provided in 3 - English, Spanish, and Somali. Making it so that even though a person may be able to take the knowledge test in their native language, they might not be able to study for the exam in this same language. This creates notable barriers to transportation for many families in Ohio.

HB 449 is asking for the Ohio Driver Manual to be translated into any language that the test is already given in. As sponsors of the bill, we are only trying to level the playing field for everyone who calls Ohio home. As Ohioans, we should all have the same opportunities, but we should also all have access to the resources that make these opportunities possible. It is simply not enough to allow people to

take the knowledge exam in their native language if we are not giving them a fair chance of passing the exam and getting their driver's license.

Access to transportation impacts many aspects of a person's life. When families struggle with transportation, absenteeism rises in schools, people are more likely to delay their medical care, and families can struggle to access healthy food outlets. Lack of access to transportation not only limits a person's everyday movement but their full participation in society.

This is a logical legislative fix to a systemic issue. If the test is already administered in these languages, we should break down these language barriers and make it so that all the families we serve can access the information and resources they need to succeed here in Ohio, regardless of the language they speak.

As representatives of Summit and Franklin County, two of the counties with the largest refugee populations in Ohio, we urge you to support HB 449 for the profound impact it would have on the communities we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I would like to hand the microphone to Representative Abdullahi to take it from here and then we will be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.
