



**Representative Terrence Upchurch
20th House District**

Chair Matthews, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston and the members of the House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 538.

HB 538 will designate the month of May, Lupus Awareness Month, bringing well-needed attention to a disease that affects so many of our loved ones, especially our African American women. It has been researched by the Lupus Foundation of America that 90% of people living with Lupus are women and it is 2 to 3 times more prevalent amongst African Americans. More research is needed to lower these statistics, we have over 1.5 million people in the United States that are forced to deal with extreme symptoms like, pain, fatigue, hair loss, cognitive issues, physical impairments and sometimes these issues develop into something as extreme as strokes and cardiovascular disease. These are life-changing and devastating symptoms that currently have no cure.

We want to bring awareness to a disease that disproportionately affects people that look like my mother and my grandmother and forces them to deal with their symptoms changing on a day-to-day basis. We just had the opportunity to hear of my joint sponsor's wife's constant battle with this disease and I believe it is our job to promote the health and well-being of all Ohioans. Designating May as Lupus Awareness Month will bring much needed awareness to programs that can help and hopefully birth new research mechanisms to find a cure for this horrible disease.

Thank you all for the opportunity to testify on HB 538, I urge a yes vote and am open to answer any questions from the committee.

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