

88th House District
Seneca and Sandusky County



Committees
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Ways and Means
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Gary Click
State Representative

H.B. 144 – Sponsor Testimony

Ohio House Community Revitalization Committee

Chairman Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the House Community Revitalization Committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 144, also known as Keith’s Law. Keith’s Law was introduced last year in the 135th General Assembly and received favorably by the Homeland Security Committee. However, we ran out of time before we could make significant improvements which are reflected in this version of the bill.

When I began serving in the legislature, my goal was to be able to picture a face behind every bill I sponsored. Some of the best legislation comes to us directly from our employers; the citizens we represent.

Keith Jesse created the Community Safety Program years ago to advocate on behalf of the special needs community and is passionate about teaching safety and the importance of community engagement to special needs children. Keith is transparent about his own special needs and is an advocate for others who find it difficult to advocate for themselves. You will soon have an opportunity to meet him for yourselves.

Keith’s unique blend of experience teaching safety and standing up for the special needs community led him to reach out to my office and suggest a way for special needs individuals to inform emergency first responders of their needs in advance of a crisis. A limited number of counties and townships in Ohio maintain voluntary databases for the special needs community to sign up for and provide life-saving information to EMS dispatch and personnel ahead of emergency situations. While they provide a valuable service locally, they are severely limited to their specific locality and do not share information statewide.

The goal of Keith’s Law is to provide a solution by establishing a voluntary database at the state level for special needs individuals to share relevant and vital

information with first responders in advance of a crisis. Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities would develop a verifications system to be voluntarily shared with the Department of Public Safety. The department will share this information with each county 9-1-1 system which will be required provide appropriate information to first responders when dispatched to provide services.

This statewide database would be widely accessible to all Ohioans and carries the advantage of extending responsiveness across the state without being limited by the boundaries of various patchwork communities. Every first responder knows that time is of the essence when an emergency strikes and each passing second becomes crucial. Keith's Law will assist EMS services by providing crucial information relating to special needs individuals as they are dispatched to the scene or when they run a background check via the statewide database.

I am grateful that Keith reached out to ask for help and I ask this committee to join me in providing that help to our special needs community throughout Ohio. This bill is also personal for my joint sponsor, Representative Lorenz. After his testimony, we would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,



State Representative Gary Click
Ohio House District 88



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