



REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE COCKLEY
HOUSE DISTRICT 06

House Health Committee
HB 32 Sponsor Testimony
April 2, 2025

Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony for HB 32, the Celebrating Disabilities Month Act, which designates July as Celebrating Disabilities Month in Ohio.

As a person with a disability, this bill holds great personal significance to me, and I am proud to sponsor this important legislation alongside my colleague and friend, Representative Jarrells.

The goal of HB 32 is simple: to honor the contributions, achievements, and resilience of Ohioans with disabilities. By officially recognizing July as Celebrating Disabilities Month, we are creating an opportunity to celebrate the strength, leadership, and courage of individuals with disabilities who continue to break down barriers and lead in every corner of our society.

July is also significant because it marks the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which, over 30 years ago, transformed the landscape of accessibility in this country. While the ADA opened doors to education,

employment, and public life for individuals with disabilities, we cannot ignore that challenges persist today.

About 15% of Ohioans live with a disability, and too many of them still face systemic barriers to full inclusion and equal opportunities. For example, in 2024, 43.8% of individuals with disabilities ages 16 to 64 in Ohio were employed, compared to 77.3% of individuals without disabilities. These statistics are a reminder that while progress has been made, there is still so much work to be done.

This bill is not only a celebration of progress, but also a call to action. By designating July as Celebrating Disabilities Month, we're sending a clear message that Ohio is committed to continuing its work to increase accessibility and make life better for its citizens. A more inclusive Ohio means a state where all individuals can live with dignity, and where differences are not only accepted but embraced.

We ask that you please support HB 32 for all Ohioans living with a disability, their family, their loved ones, and their caregivers. This designation will provide an important opportunity to raise awareness, foster acceptance, and celebrate the diversity that strengthens our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.