

Representative Meredith Lawson-Rowe
House District 5

Committees:

Local Government
Community Revitalization
Veterans and Military Development



Representative Kellie Deeter
House District 54

Committees:

Health, **Vice Chair**
Arts, Athletics, and Tourism
Children and Human Services
Insurance

HB 104 Sponsor Testimony
House Health Committee
April 2, 2025

Chairman Schmidt, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 104.

House Bill 104 seeks to establish February 14th as Cardiovascular Health Awareness Day in Ohio. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in our state and in our nation. By designating this day, we aim to raise awareness, encourage preventive measures, and promote healthier lifestyles among Ohioans.

Cardiovascular disease affects individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and communities. It accounts for nearly one in three deaths across the United States, and in Ohio, thousands of lives are lost each year to heart-related conditions. Despite advancements in medical treatment and research, many of these deaths are preventable through increased education, early detection, and proactive health choices. I now invite my joint sponsor to speak more on this important piece of legislation.

Most, if not all of us have known somebody affected by cardiovascular disease. More than half of U.S. adults are afflicted with some form of the disease, with one person dying from it every 33 seconds. It is especially prevalent for women and in the African American community. Nearly half of American women live with some form heart disease and is the leading cause of death for women internationally. African Americans face a disproportionately high burden of cardiovascular disease prevalence, mortality, and hypertension compared to other racial groups in the United States. Even scarier than these statistics is the indications of polling that most people in the United States are unaware of the severity and prevalence of cardiovascular disease in our nation across all sexes, races, and ethnic/cultural groups.

The need for this bill is real and the selection of February 14th—widely recognized as Valentine’s Day—is deliberate. With rising healthcare costs, preventative actions, such as this bill designation, are necessary. The day of February 14th, which already symbolizes love and care, serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of heart health. Through this designation, we hope to encourage Ohioans to take charge of their

well-being by understanding risk factors, recognizing symptoms, and adopting heart-healthy habits.

HB 104 is more than just a symbolic recognition; it has the potential to foster collaborations among healthcare professionals, advocacy organizations, and community leaders. It will provide an opportunity for educational campaigns, free screenings, and public initiatives that promote cardiovascular health awareness across the state.

By passing this legislation, Ohio will join other states that have recognized the significance of cardiovascular health awareness and its impact on public health. This is a crucial step toward reducing preventable deaths and improving the quality of life for all Ohioans.

We respectfully ask for your support in advancing House Bill 104 and welcome any questions from the committee. Thank you.