

Jennifer Kucera

Disability Advocate

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Interested Party Testimony for House Bill 32

Thank you, Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of recognizing the disability community in Ohio. My name is Jennifer Kucera and I am a Disability Advocate, please accept this testimony for HB 32.

I am a person with a disability. I am 55 and was born with spinal muscular atrophy which is a type of muscular dystrophy. I was able to walk when I was younger, but my disease has progressed to the point that I utilize a wheelchair.

When I was younger, I disliked my disability very much. I didn't have any role models in my life with disabilities. I was born before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed and back then, in 1969 and in the 70s disability was thought of as something that needed to be fixed or corrected.

Today we are seeing people with disabilities being included in all facets of community life. I was never filled with disability pride when I was younger, but as an adult I am very proud of being a person with a disability! My disability has taught me a lot of things that I don't think I would have learned any other way. It has shown me patience, courage, and has given me a strength that I never would have had without this disability. I am proud and thankful for all that I have achieved.

To be able to celebrate disability in the month of July would be an extraordinary thing! I never want younger people with disabilities to grow up the way that I did. I want to see young people with disabilities understand their strength and celebrate their differences. I ask you to please support House Bill 32 and help all Ohioans who have a disability celebrate in July!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely

Jennifer Kucera

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