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Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and esteemed members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to speak on this bill.

For those not aware, my son Henry is on the autism spectrum. He's a phenomenal kid, and he is very high-functioning. Henry, like my other three children, has his license and drives our car. Henry is the best driver out of the four of my children, and hopefully, my daughters do not get too upset with that comment.

While Henry is a great driver, a few years back he was pulled over for not having his lights on. Thank goodness the school resource officer was the one who stopped him, because he knew Henry very well. He calmed Henry down and simply told him to call his mom and to put it on speakerphone. Again, Henry is a great kid, but high-pressure situations like this are very stressful. Without the officer being someone that Henry knew, the situation could have gone a lot differently. Delaware County has since implemented a special needs registry, which assists with these situations.

Our job as the state legislature is to create laws that better the citizens of Ohio. My joint sponsor and I believe that House Bill 144 will do just that. This bill is geared toward ensuring that our police, fire department, and emergency medical services have as much information as possible when responding to situations. Individuals with a disability, as outlined in this bill, deserve our support, and as a state, we are not doing enough to help them. Individuals with a disability deal with challenges and situations that we often do not think about. These situations require unique responses, and we believe House Bill 144 will help our first responders appropriately handle situations involving someone with a disability. This bill will help those first responders and Ohioans with disabilities.

House Bill 144 is a bipartisan piece of legislation that should be well supported. Thank you again for allowing me to speak on this bill.