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Gary Click
State Representative

Committees
Civil Justice
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Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 144, also known as Keith's Law.

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 has gone so far as to sponsor a special needs canine trained exclusively for search and rescue for special needs individuals. It is the only canine of its kind in Ohio and perhaps in the nation. This dog is not trained to attack or to search for drugs. Its singular mission is for search, rescue, and comfort.

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 first responders 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. 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. I am also happy to report that this bill was unanimously favorably reported to the House Floor, and passed with an astounding 89 yes votes, and only 2 no votes.

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 first responders 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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