



Mental Health & Recovery Services Board
SENECA, OTTAWA, SANDUSKY & WYANDOT COUNTIES

June 10, 2025

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties to express our full support for the H.B. 144, also known as Keith's Law.

Our organization represents individuals struggling with mental illness and addiction, many of whom encounter first responders in our communities. This proposed legislation will allow individuals with mental health conditions, instead of only communication disability, to be included in the registry. This proposed legislation also makes the database available to emergency medical services through each countywide 911 system. Our organization knows first-hand how important and critical the interaction between first responders and individuals with special needs is, including mental illness. Through our local Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, we educate first responders on various methods and techniques on how to de-escalate a situation when interacting with individuals who experience a mental health crisis. The proposed legislation will add another tool that first responders can utilize when interacting with individuals with special needs.

In our Board district (Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky and Wyandot Counties) we have seen a significant increase in mental health calls and community mental health crisis encounters. Many of these encounters are with our local law enforcement agencies. We are hoping that this legislation, once passed, will be promoted and utilized to assist our law enforcement agencies when dealing with a person with a history of mental illness. This is critical for the safety of the individual as well as the safety of the law enforcement agent.

I am asking for your support regarding H.B. 144. If you have any question, please contact me at 419-448-0640 or email at director@mhsosw.org.

Sincerely,

Mircea Handru, MBA
Executive Director