

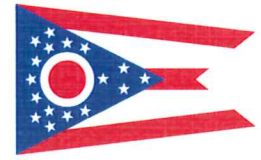


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Committee on Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety

Testimony on House Bill 359

March 4, 2026

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 359, the "Joshua Alert" bill.

My name is Kyle Erdeljac. I am a law enforcement officer, and I am testifying on behalf of the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police, which represents more than 23,000 full-time and retired law enforcement officers across Ohio.

House Bill 359 addresses a problem law enforcement officers face: when a child with autism wanders or elopes from home, *time is critical*. These are not our typical runaway cases. Many children with autism are non-verbal and unable to communicate. They may not appreciate danger the same way as you or I. Tragically, some are drawn to water, and drownings happen.

I have friends who are raising children with autism, and elopement is one of their biggest fears. When an autistic child goes missing, they need help fast, and we need a clear way to get the word out.

Under this legislation, once we verify key information, the statewide emergency alert system would notify the public of the missing child with autism. It builds on tools that already exist, it helps get more eyes looking sooner, and it supports the coordinated searches already being conducted by our law enforcement members.

For these reasons, the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police respectfully asks for your support for House Bill 359. Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

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