



DREAM. ACHIEVE. SOAR.

SB 254- Proponent Testimony
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Angela Frith, President, St. Rita School for the Deaf
March 4, 2026

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 254 which will designate April as Deaf History Month in Ohio, aligning with the federal recognition of this important month.

This legislation recognizes the contributions and value of Deaf individuals across Ohio and demonstrates a commitment to visibility, inclusion, and equity. You are helping elevate understanding and ensuring that the contributions of the Deaf community are acknowledged and celebrated statewide.

Since St. Rita School for the Deaf in Greater Cincinnati was founded over 110 years ago, we have seen firsthand the impact of awareness and accessibility. St. Rita embraces the Deaf community and culture by providing a barrier-free communication environment where American Sign Language is central to learning and connection. Through individualized instruction, personal attention, and direct communication, students are empowered to develop their strengths and skills, grow in confidence, and become contributing members of society. Each child's success is celebrated, and their identity as Deaf individuals is honored as a source of pride and potential.

The Deaf community and its rich culture contribute meaningfully to the fabric of Ohio. Traditions such as language, storytelling, and a deep sense of community create strong bonds and preserve a vibrant cultural heritage. When the state intentionally promotes Deaf awareness, it fosters collaboration among schools, agencies, businesses, and service organizations to ensure accessibility, equity, and opportunity. This not only benefits Deaf individuals and families but strengthens Ohio as a whole by modeling inclusion and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.

Thank you again for championing this important initiative. I encourage this Committee and the full Senate to quickly pass this legislation. Your support sends a powerful message that Ohio recognizes, values, and stands alongside the Deaf community. We are grateful for your partnership and leadership.

Sincerely,

Angela Frith, President

