

March 27, 2017

132nd General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2017-2018

Ref: H.B. 115  
Representatives Gavarone, Wiggam  
Cosponsors: Representatives Ryan, Greenspan, Kick, Goodman, Hambley  
Thompson, Arndt, Lipps, Patton, Stein, Riedel

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ralph Wineland. I retired in April 2016 from the Department of Veterans Affairs as the Team Leader/Supervisor/Therapist for the Toledo Vet Center. Prior to that I worked for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. I am a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and a License Professional Counselor in the State of Ohio. I proudly served as a medic in the US Army 1968 - 1970

I would like to submit this letter in support of passage of H.B. 115. As a Vietnam veteran and a counselor working with combat veterans I have witnessed firsthand the difficulties and dangers that law enforcement officers face when having to deal with individuals with communication problems due to the existence of a disability such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Autism shares a similarity to PTSD in regards to communication skills especially during times of high anxiety such as being pulled over for a traffic violation or going through a routine sobriety check point.

Communication is the skill we use to connect with each other, how we perceive our environment and how we ultimately find success or failure. Passage of H.B. 115 would ensure due process under the law for these individuals with medically verifiable communication disorders due to an acquired or at birth disability. It would assist law enforcement officers to readily identify these individuals and to safely communicate and interact with them. Passage of H.B. 115 will benefit individuals with communication disorders, law enforcement officers, parents, guardians and all Ohioans.

I wish to thank the committee members for their thoughtful and compassionate consideration that you are giving H.B. 115.

Respectfully,

*Ralph Wineland*