



**State Representative Richard D. Brown**  
**Ohio's 20<sup>th</sup> House District**

**House Bill 659**  
**Sponsor Testimony**  
**11/14/18**

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, and Ranking Member Antonio, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 659. HB 659 will greatly expand access to audio prescription readers for blind and visually impaired persons by requiring pharmacists to provide such individuals with an audio prescription reader for at least the duration of the prescription, or to provide the opportunity to purchase the device.

As is often the case now, Ohioans with vision impairments have to utilize unreliable methods to differentiate which pill bottles contain their prescriptions. These include tying objects to the bottle, which do not always stay attached, or leaving different prescriptions in different places in their homes to tell them apart. In light of our heightened concern about securely storing painkillers and other opiates, this is not an ideal method to determine which pill is which.

Additionally, without a prescription reader, blind and visually impaired individuals do not have reliable access to prescription instructions and information concerning side effects.

This is an especially important issue given that less than 10 percent of those who are considered legally blind can read Braille. Increasing access to these prescription reader devices will greatly benefit those who are blind or have vision impairments.

Audio prescription readers are an important tool that individuals can use to differentiate between prescriptions, and importantly, have reliable access to prescription instructions. While it is my understanding that many pharmacies already print their labels in such a way so that they comply with a prescription reader, House Bill 659 will put into place guaranteed access to them for people who are blind or have vision impairments so that they may be able access their medications safely.

As many of your offices did, I met with individuals representing the National Federation of the Blind Ohio, who informed me of the urgent need for legislation of this type. Recently, the Nevada state assembly unanimously passed similar legislation and it was signed into law by that state's Republican governor.

Ohio should follow Nevada's lead and take an important step forward to improve access to audio prescription readers. I urge the committee to pass HB 659. Thank you once again and I will now take any questions that you may have.