

November 28, 2017

To the members of the Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee, Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schiavoni,

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is John Moore and I am the CEO of Deaf Services Center, a Non-Profit committed to serving the needs of the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf blind throughout 37 counties in Ohio.

I am personally endorsing HB 115 for the voluntary registration of drivers who may have difficulty communicating because they cannot hear or have a speech disability. This enables protections for both the driver and for the police officer. The driver can feel at ease knowing that the police officer will be able to know what kind of communication access barriers the driver may have.

For example, a friend of mine 25 years ago was pulled over for speeding. My friend is deaf and he tried to speak to the officer. Since his speech was not clear, sounded like he was drinking. In fact he was not, and the police officer assumed he was drunk and pulled him out of the car, and arrested him. The officer only learned after my friend was taken to the station to be processed, he was merely deaf and had not touched a drop of alcohol. He was cleared of all charges and still carries a distrust of the police force that is tasked to serve us. It was a traumatic experience for him. Why did this happen? It was because the officer had no idea the driver was deaf.

Because of this, and other situations experienced by other deaf and hard of hearing drivers, I follow a procedure when I am pulled over. I keep my hands on the steering wheel until the officer comes and taps on my window. I then point to my ears and mouths the word cannot hear. Then I roll the window down, and point to where my wallet would be and I keep my hands visible at all times. I do the same when I obtain my registration from the glove compartment. Not all officers have experienced working with a person who is deaf or have a speech disability, and I make sure I do not make any rash movements to protect myself.

It is because of my personal experience and the experience my friend had to endure, I strongly support the passage of HB 115.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

Respectfully yours,

John Moore,
CEO/Executive Director
Deaf Services Center, Inc.