



**Senator Sandra Williams  
21<sup>st</sup> Ohio Senate District**

**Committees:**

- Public Utilities – Ranking Member
- Ways and Means – Ranking Member
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Insurance and Financial Institutions
- Finance Subcommittee on Higher Ed - Vice Chair

**Senate Bill 48 Sponsor Testimony  
Local Government, Public Safety and Veteran Affairs Committee  
March 7, 2017**

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veteran Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 48.

Senate Bill 48 was introduced at the request of individuals and organizations who serve the deaf and hard of hearing communities. The bill would create a special license plate for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and requires the Registrar to include an identifying symbol on a driver's license, commercial license, or state-issued identification card of an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, if requested.

Most law enforcement ADA complaints stem from a wrongful arrest or failure to reasonably accommodate the disabled person during a stop. Law enforcement will be able to clearly see the designated symbol on the actual license plate upon approaching the vehicle and a second verification on the driver's license. The ability for law enforcement to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing individuals is crucial. This legislation will assist law enforcement officers in properly executing their duties through this two-step verification process.

Adding a symbol is a public safety measure. For their own safety, law enforcement should be provided with as much information about person in a car as possible. By not passing this bill, Ohio is neglecting its responsibility to facilitate clear communication between law enforcement and deaf or hard of hearing people.

I believe Senate Bill 48 is essential to keeping both our constituents safe and providing law enforcement the tools to be best equipped to handle situations. I respectfully request your favorable passage of Senate Bill 48. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony and I will be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.