

**Testimony on Lou Gehrig's Disease & S.B. 163 to create
an ALS Awareness License Plate
(ALS-Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis)**

House Transportation & Public Safety Committee
The Honorable Doug Green, Chair
Ohio State House
Columbus, Ohio

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Presented by:

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Person with ALS

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Hello, my name is Rob Palladino. I feel honored to be asked by the ALS Association to tell my brother John's story.

More than 20 years ago he was diagnosed with "Lou Gehrig's Disease". You see, back then rarely was the disease referred to as ALS and few knew it stood for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Many knew the story of the New York Yankee developing a disease in the prime of his career and giving the "Luckiest Man" speech. Most were unaware as to how devastating ALS is.

It started with a limp and then he lost the use of his legs. We moved him into my Mother's house and with the help of friends and family, we remodeled rooms to accommodate his daily needs. Weeks later, the symptoms spread to his respiratory system. We were forced to make a decision to put him on a ventilator to keep him alive.

John was released from the hospital and sent to a nursing facility. A doctor referred us to the ALS Association and I met Lisa Bruening, Speech Therapist. Without Lisa's help, dedication and compassion towards John we would not have been able to communicate his needs, wishes, dreams and prayers.

John still needed answers. I hired an ambulance, recruited a respiratory therapist and a nurse and headed to Ohio State to see one of the top specialist in the country on neurological diseases-Dr. John Kissel. I will always remember Dr. Kissel getting choked up and teary-eyed as he told us that John had ALS - that is the kind of compassion this disease creates.

John passed away in 2005 after a 6-year battle. The whole time he was sick he never gave up hope that a cure would be found.

9 years later Pete Frates dumped a bucket of ice water over his head and the "Ice

Bucket Challenge” movement begin. Thousands of people around the world participated, videotape and challenged others. Everyone from ex-Presidents to movie stars, Pro-athletes and people like you and me. I challenged all 50 co-workers at the Shelly Company office to participate. In addition, we still do an annual cookout to raise money for the ALS Association.

The one word that sums up the Ice Bucket Challenge is AWARENESS. Awareness of this horrible disease has raised millions of dollars that has led to the development of new medicine and helps provide the ALS Association with resources to assist patients here in OHIO daily.

I started my story talking about “Lou Gehrig’s Disease” because too many people were unaware of challenges facing ALS patients.

An ALS organizational license plate is very important to help create and continue awareness and direct viewers to the ALS Association. Please help keep the momentum going!