

HB295

Interested Party Testimony

Ohio Senate, Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee

Jeremy Morris

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February 12, 2020

Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide Interested Party Testimony on HB295. My name is Jeremy Morris and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council, a State affiliated Council that promotes independence and inclusion for individuals with significant disabilities across the State of Ohio.

As part of our work, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss legislation that impacts the community of persons with disabilities in Ohio and to be a resource to the General Assembly as they consider this legislation.

HB295, if enacted, will regulate the operation of electric scooters that have been increasing in numbers across cities in Ohio.

The bill requires that scooters have audible signals, imposes speed restrictions, and allows law enforcement to ticket operators who impede the normal flow of pedestrian traffic. All three of these requirements are beneficial to individuals with disabilities who are navigating the sidewalks as well.

Audible signals – Alerts individuals with visual impairments to be aware of oncoming scooters that they otherwise would not sense. Electric scooters are extremely quiet. If you can't see them and you can't hear them, the likelihood of collision is heightened. Safety is enhanced for all pedestrians but especially those with visual impairments if scooter operators have an obligation to announce their presence when approaching from behind.

Speed restrictions – Restrictions on speed allow for safer travel for individuals using mobility devices. If a scooter is operating at a higher rate of speed, an individual utilizing a mobility aid may not have the ability to get out of the way in time.

Ticketing – Providing law enforcement with the tool to ticket creates a mechanism to deter unsafe use. This is especially beneficial to people with disabilities that have to not only focus on automobile traffic, and pedestrian traffic, but also electric scooters.

One major impact to the disability community that is not addressed in this legislation is the parking of scooters when not in use. Parking scooters in places along walkways and curbs creates

significant barriers to individuals with mobility and visual disabilities, as well as to individuals without disabilities.

In 2019, a disability rights group filed a lawsuit in federal district court against companies that operate the electric scooter services for their failure to prevent individuals using the services from parking the scooters in publicly accessible sidewalks.

<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/04/698768297/disability-rights-group-sues-san-diego-over-scooters-on-sidewalks>

Restrictions on parking scooters in locations that do not block foot or wheelchair traffic, or access points would be highly beneficial to the disability community.

Thank you for reviewing this submission of Interested Party testimony, my contact information is below if you have any additional questions after the hearing,

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