

October 4, 2021

Ohio House Civil Justice Committee

Proponent Testimony HB 352

Prohibit blindness from denying or limiting care of minor

Submitted by Jordy D. Stringer, Executive Director Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and Members of the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee,

I want to take this opportunity to graciously thanked the committee for hearing and reading my testimony. I am a blind parent, and I am quite aware of the necessity for legislation that will protect the rights of blind parents. I have a daughter, who is cited and because of my blindness her sighted mother continues to refuse to allow me to participate regularly in her life. I am educated, employed, and fully capable of offering great contributions that I believe that would help her make tremendous strides.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of education and quite frankly the mean spirit and the lack of legal protection of her sighted mother I am unable to make the contributions I believe will help this young lady grow into a productive citizen. Unfortunately, she lives in another state and because of my limited ability to regularly travel there I seldom get to see her. But much of this has to do with the idea that because I am blind, she should not be allowed to travel to Ohio to visit me.

Because of the lack of protection, she can get away with not allowing me to participate actively in the rearing of the child because of my blindness. On many occasions she has when angry use my blindness against me, and lives in a state where support for blind people is limited due to the antiquated nature of its legislature.

I urge Ohio to strongly consider what this type of discrimination means and urge us to pass legislation that would not allow other fathers to be treated as I am. I know that this legislation will unfortunately not do anything to help my situation, but it is important that other individuals who are unable to even provide voice to their concerns have something that will protect them from mean-spirited people, and the lack of education and understanding about blindness.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 352.

Work Address: 418 South Broad Street, Lancaster Ohio 43130

Home Address: 1991 Sunlight Court Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Phone: (740) 422-9177