

Dear Chair Wilkin and members of the House Government Oversight Committee,

My name is Susan Koller, and I live in Cincinnati. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 55, which allows Ohioans to submit testimony virtually For House and Senate committee hearings. I would also like to thank Representative Bridget Kelly, who is my representative, for sponsoring this important bill. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the fact that we all must be flexible, and allowing Ohioans to testify virtually would help achieve this goal. Sometimes attending an event in person is impossible, no matter how much the person wants to attend. This is especially true for me because I have a disability. I would like to share several reasons why having the option to testify virtually would be a perfect accommodation for me.

I cannot drive and must rely on public transportation, transportation services or the kindness of friends and family to go places. Also, I cannot go places on a whim. I have to carefully plan out every trip. Thirdly, I like to be independent and do not like to impose on others to take me places. Finally often when I go places, I need to be accompanied by another person to help me with my personal needs including toileting and feeding while I am away from home. Bringing another person with me again means that I have to impose on that person and could not testify at hearings without a lot of advanced planning.

Allowing virtual testimony would make the legislative process more inclusive to all Ohioans, not just Ohioans with disabilities. Having a more inclusive legislative process leads to a more inclusive Ohio, and I know that is a goal we all want to achieve. Thank you for letting me share my views on the importance of allowing virtual testimony.

Sincerely,

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