

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, my name is Doug Simmons and I am a 20 year employee of Epilepsy Alliance Ohio, a non-profit organization currently serving 64 counties in Ohio, ten in Kentucky, and two in Indiana.

Through my years advocating for people with epilepsy, providing counseling, facilitating support groups, and educating public and private groups and schools, I can attest to the need for education specific to epilepsy. My intent is to share some statistics about epilepsy with you.

According to the CDC in 2015, 3.4 million Americans have epilepsy nationwide. One out of every 10 people will have a seizure at some point in their life. One in 26 people will be diagnosed with epilepsy. Locally, this equates to about 140,000 people in the State of Ohio, living with epilepsy. In terms of school children, think of a school with 1000 children, this means about 6 of them have epilepsy. There are more than twice as many people with epilepsy in the United States, again 3.4 million people, as the number of people with the following more popular neurologic conditions combined: cerebral palsy (764,000 in the US per CP.org, 4 in 10 also have epilepsy), cystic fibrosis (35,000 in the US per CDC), muscular dystrophy (250,000 in the US per CDC), and multiple sclerosis (914,000 per National Multiple Sclerosis Society).

The organizations that specialize in helping those affected by epilepsy in the State of Ohio (Epilepsy Alliance Ohio, Epilepsy Foundation of Ohio, Epilepsy Center of Northwest Ohio, and Epilepsy Association) work tirelessly to educate where we can, generally in the workplace and schools. But due to the sheer number of people affected by epilepsy and as evidenced by so many other states passing similar needed legislation, the time is now for Ohio to become Seizure Safe and one of the best most comprehensive ways to do this is to enact HB 606 to ensure those in Ohio schools receive acceptable and consistent seizure smart training.

Thank you.

I'll be happy to address any questions you might have.