



Marianne Wilger

Testimony in support of HB 537

Designation of February 12<sup>th</sup> as Cholangiocarcinoma Awareness Day

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Senate Health Committee – thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of HB 537. This bill would designate February 12th as Cholangiocarcinoma Awareness Day.

On May 15, 2021 my husband Steve Wilger and I were at the Cincinnati Police FOP Hall for a 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday party with many of our brothers & sisters in blue and he was feeling great. Fast forward to one month ago on April 15, 2022 and he died of Cholangiocarcinoma - a rare, painful, horrible disease. Like many, I had never heard of this cancer. It is extremely rare and very difficult to diagnose with only 10,000 people in the U.S. developing this cancer each year. Steve tried to keep strong and positive during the 10 months for me and our daughter Becky. However, like a large percentage of others diagnosed with Cholangiocarcinoma he was already at Stage IV. I am still mad as heck that my love of 45+ years together is gone, and I hope that others like me will not have to go through this.

Our hope is to increase awareness and research to get this disease diagnosed early before it is Stage IV. I hope this bill allows CC patients the opportunity to be seen and provides awareness to those that may be experiencing symptoms. We must develop a way to screen for this cancer and eventually find a cure.

February is already widely recognized as Cholangiocarcinoma Awareness Month. Designating February 12th as Cholangiocarcinoma Awareness Day is a simple next step to shed light on this rare and deadly disease.

Once again, Chairman Huffman and Members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 537.