

Written Testimony of Bobby "Joe" Osborne
Founder, Zanesville Deaf Program Alumni Association
Co-Founder, Ohio Citizens for Deaf Cultures
Before Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

February 28, 2017 Ohio SB 27 Hearing

First of all, I wanted to thank Senator Beagle and his honorable committee for sponsoring this Ohio Senate Bill 27; Ohio Deaf History Month.

I, Bobby "Joe" Osborne, am the youngest child of 2nd generation of deaf family, who never learn any sign language until late age. I am speaking on the behalf of Ohio Citizens for Deaf Cultures and Zanesville Deaf Program Alumni Association to help you to understand how important this bill is. Both of my parents are the first deaf descendant in their hearing families that resides in Zanesville, Ohio. My grandmother, Dessie (Hambel) Allman have fought tirelessly to get the Board of Education in Zanesville, Ohio to provide a suitable education locally for my mother, Faye Ann, who was 6 years old and was attending the Boarding School in Athens, Ohio that specializes in Deaf Education with Oralism. My parents moved to Newark, Ohio due to my dad's new job at Owens Corning Fiberglass. My grandparents had moved to Newark as well to become their "alarm clock". All of my brothers and sisters, except for one sister were deaf.

After talking with my grandmother, I had learn about how she got the Deaf Program established at The Sunshine School for the Crippled Children & Sight Saving. She had thought that to herself that there has to be something better for her daughter at closer to home. So she checked around and have spoken with so many people in the community. She had found The Sunshine School for the Crippled Children & Sight Saving but nothing for the Deaf. However, they have told her that she would need to gather up some names of the parents of deaf children and that they would even consider something for the Deaf. The Sunshine School was sponsored by The Easter Seals and The Rotary Club of Zanesville started in early 1900's. From what I recalled that she had so many signatures and that it was more than enough. I believe that it was in 1938.

Her reasons was to find an Education closer home for Faye Ann was because that she could not deal with the pain knowing that her first born daughter was so many miles away from home and upset. Faye Ann was so confused and could not understand about why that she had to be so far away from family and have to stay in Athens, to get an Education. It breaks my grandmother's heart every time that they had to drop her off

in Athens because Faye Ann's crying and screaming at every time that they dropped her off.

Zanesville Board of Education established a deaf program at The Sunshine School for the Crippled Children & Sight Saving. My mother was the first deaf student that attend in that Deaf Program that was established in 1939. Ms. Jean Carter, later, Mrs. Robert Virgil Ankrum was her Teacher, who later became the Director for the Deaf Program.

When my brothers and sisters were old enough to attend school, my grandmother started driving them to Zanesville from Newark on her own. Eventually there were more deaf children that resides in Newark needed to be transport to school. She gladly to tag them along in her station wagon without of any help from anyone for about 4 years. She even went out and bought passenger van so she could transport as many deaf children to school. When the news traveled of what she had done and that she had no more room to add more deaf children in her passenger van. She again fought to provide something for the Deaf Children but this time it was with the Newark School Board of Education to provide the transportation from Newark to Zanesville with the help of Mrs. Jean Ankrum.

Mrs. Jean Ankrum have been in contact with the Newark School Board of Education with the reasoning of why my grandmother need to have something bigger to transport the deaf children to Zanesville and that she had done this in the past 4 years, providing her own personal vehicle as well bigger one. Newark School Board of Education made it possible to provide a 30-passenger School Bus, eventually another bigger bus as more deaf children from Newark were enrolled. They even hired her to become a School Bus Driver in 1960. My Aunt Patty was an helper on the school bus with my grandmother as more deaf children were added to the bus because it was hard for her to drive the bus while the children roaming around. When my grandmother retired in 1978, The Newark City School Board had hired my mother to be official Bus Aide. She had been Bus Aide for approximately 15 years.

My grandmother was very devoted lady with a big heart to the Deaf Community as many of them have called her "Grandma". She is also one of the most generous person and always wanted to provide the deaf people the best with what she could.

I wanted to thank you for your time and believe this bill is so significant to be adopted and pass to promote the society with a clear and better understanding on how broad our deaf cultures because our cultures are break up into many different aspects.

Respectfully,
Bobby "Joe" Osborne