

Darrell Doudt, On Behalf of Citizens for Deaf Cultures

Testimony of the Ohio Deaf History Month
IN SUPPORT OF SB 27: OH Deaf History Month

Senator Dave Burke, Chairman of Health, Human Services
and Medicaid Committee

February 28, 2017

Good Afternoon! Senator Burke and Members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

First of all, I personally would like to thank Senator Bill Beagle, and his legislative aide, Ethan Zucal for their time. They took to assist me with the legislative process.

I also would like to share with you this important message from our citizens. The petitioners that signed the forms, are asking for your support to promote Ohio Deaf History Month which runs from March 13-April 15.

Allow me to explain briefly about myself. I am currently employed with US Postal Service for 31 years. My grandparents and parents are deaf. I am fluent in American Sign Language. It is important to note that American Sign Language is the fourth most commonly used language in the United States.

It came to my attention about a missing link. Our society has lacked information or awareness regarding progress made by deaf pioneers since the founding of the first deaf school in 1817; the rich history of our Deaf Heritage, our language, and Deaf Education movement in the U.S. in the mid-1800s. Part of the problem is that documents about the growth of the Deaf Community and Deaf Schools were not found in library books. It is constant struggle for our Deaf Community to gain recognition for their

efforts due to language barriers and lack of awareness. Deaf citizens in Ohio have a voice and are capable of contributing to community. Our mission is to promote equality and empowering deaf and hard of hearing citizens by using their potential to make connections with society by embracing diversity through public awareness and community resources. With your support by recognizing SB27, and it may contribute greater impact toward improving deaf citizens' quality of life in the State of Ohio.

For example:

Our public libraries support stewardship of library collections and promote cultural heritage on special events such as "Black History Month", "Hispanic Heritage Month" and other special holidays celebrated by other ethnic groups. The month of February is best known for remembering the important contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout our nation's history. It impacts greatly towards every citizen to understand more about their cultures, heritages and customs.

Therefore, we are seeking this similar opportunity to have Ohio Deaf History Month to celebrate diversity and increase awareness of our Deaf Heritage and American Sign Language through library resources. It leads a time to reflect on past accomplishments, it is also a time to look at the impact people are making today. We need your supports.

My thanks to Senators Bacon, Brown, Eklund, Gardner, Manning, Obhof, Schiavoni, Thomas, Uecker, Williams, Yuko, Hoagland, Oelslager for being co-sponsors of the Ohio Senate Bill 27. We also thank to Ohio Library Council President Michelle Francis, and our pioneer Alice Hagemeyer

Therefore, I urge the committee to support SB 27.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give my testimony at the hearing today.