Ohio House Health Committee

November 5, 2019

Proponent Testimony HB 188

Prohibit blindness from denying or limiting care of minor

Submitted by Debra E. Baker

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the
Ohio House Health Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 188.

I work as a teacher of blind children grades k-12. I am currently self-employed in the blindness field, though I taught previously full-time in Springfield City Schools, Springfield, Ohio, from 1977-2010. During my full-time work and up to the present, I have encountered several blind parents of my students. I have found them to be certainly equally competent as sighted parents, and in some cases, more conscientious about their children’s education. Blind parents attended parent-teacher conferences regularly and also either attended or participated by phone during the conferences relevant to their children’s IEP (Individualized Education Program) team conferences.

Blindness alone should never be the exclusive measure to judge parental competence. If parent competence is judged in a court of law, substantial, documented evidence should be the criteria for guilt or innocence, not the mere presumption that because a parent is blind is proof of incompetence.

Sincerely,

Debra E. Baker

dgventure915@gmail.com