**House Bill 227 Sponsor Testimony**

**House Transportation and Public Safety Committee**

Good Morning Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for letting me testify in support of House Bill 227. House Bill 227 would create the “ALS Awareness” license plate.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or ALS, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. Motor neurons reach from the brain to the spinal cord and from the spinal cord to the muscles throughout the body. The progressive degeneration of the motor neurons in ALS eventually leads to their demise. When the motor neurons die, the ability of the brain to initiate and control muscle movement is lost. With voluntary muscle action progressively affected, people may lose the ability to speak, eat, move and breathe. The motor nerves that are affected when you have ALS are the motor neurons that provide voluntary movements and muscle control.

Based on U.S. population studies, a little over 6,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with ALS each year. (That's 15 new cases a day.) ALS usually strikes people between the ages of 40 and 70, and at least 16,000 Americans can have the disease at any given time. For unknown reasons, military veterans are approximately twice as likely to be diagnosed with the disease as the general public.

Ohio’s state license plate program is a great way to promote awareness across the state. Any help we as a legislature can provide to the fight against ALS is necessary. I ask for your support of House Bill 227 and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have after the proponents from the ALS Association have spoken.