



*We are all in this together.....you are not alone*

**THE CLEVELAND STROKE CLUB**

Senate Bill 238

February 19, 2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238. I am the Executive Director of the Cleveland Stroke Club. My late husband formed the Club almost 46 years ago. He was a speech-language pathologist who looked for ways to support stroke survivors and their caregivers. In those early years of the Club, I remember the support he gave to the founders of the Art Therapy Studio (he was on their board of directors), and suggested to many of his communication clients that they participate in what the Art Studio had to offer. Many of his clients flourished and improved their expressive language skills. I witnessed frustration in not being able to speak turn to pride in what people could do in art therapy.

Soon after my youngest was old enough to attend school, I started college and earned a Masters Degree in Speech-Language Pathology, and subsequently earned my license. I know the value of licensure. This is the best way to guarantee good quality of training therapists and maintaining that quality. A way to ensure clients that good standards of providing services should be expected.

Please pass S.B. 238. My friends deserve the reassurances that licensure can bring.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Pitts  
Executive Director  
Cleveland Stroke Club  
[pittsgeraldine@yahoo.com](mailto:pittsgeraldine@yahoo.com)

Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club and the Speak Easy program (hosted by Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center and led by Jean Nisenbom, SLP, a faculty member at CASE).

I have lived in Ohio for 29 years. Before my stroke, I worked as a steel forging supervisor in Cleveland. I had my on stroke on April Fool's Day 2007.

I participate in art and music therapy programs during our meetings at the Stroke Club. Art and music increase the activity in our brains. The programs are fun. Art increases hand motor skills. We also enjoy speaking during these projects.

Sincerely,

Damon Smith  
6905 Ridge Rd. #1C Parma OH 44129  
440-558-2275



Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am writing on behalf of my husband who had a severe stroke 29 years ago at the age of 31. (He just turned 61.) He has lived in Ohio his whole life. Prior to his stroke, he worked at the Cleveland Institute of Art as their Director of Computer Services. He was also a national champion artistic roller skater! At the time of his stroke we had been married for 4 ½ years and had two children: 2 ½ years old and a 5 ½ month old.

His stroke has left him with severe physical and cognitive challenges. The music and art therapy that he's been involved with have been critical to his physical, cognitive, and emotional development! It is imperative that these disciplines be well funded.

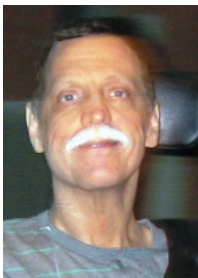
Music and art therapy are so much more than therapy. These disciplines also provide essential opportunities for improved communication, socialization, and improved confidence. My husband continues to receive music therapy to improve his ability to move. He also draws or paints whenever possible.

My husband participated in the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke project.

Sincerely,  
Deena Barrett  
3055 Berkshire Rd., Cleveland OH 4418  
[grinnanbarrett2002@yahoo.com](mailto:grinnanbarrett2002@yahoo.com)  
216-410-2306

Here is his painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project, which was facilitated by Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist.

His painting is on display at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.



Senate Bill 238  
2/14/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club and especially enjoy the music program that follows SpeakEasy. Since my stroke in 2017, I can speak very little but I can sing – I may be off key but at least the words are clear. In addition, I've been learning water color from a local artist, and my painting gives me one more way to express myself.

I am fortunate to be able to afford lessons but I know a number of stroke survivors who cannot. They would benefit from them just as much as I do. All people deserve to make their fullest possible recovery from illness, and in this case that can only happen with accredited community-provided programs.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,  
Richard Dietrich  
3125 Fairfax Road  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118  
216-371-9379

Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club.

I have lived in Ohio for 57 years. Before my stroke, I worked as a Chief Financial Officer, accountant, and software engineer in the Cleveland area. My stroke happened about 13 years ago. I enjoy bowling, golfing, and giving speeches.

I participate in the art and music therapy programs provided by the Stroke Club. I also participated in the Cleveland Stroke Club Strokes for Stroke Project. I enjoyed this art therapy project very much. I think it is very important.

I think it is very important for survivors to have more access to good art therapy programs.

Sincerely,

John Pumper  
7954 Walcott Way, Mentor, OH 44060  
216-406-5619

Here is my painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project, which was facilitated by Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist.

My painting is on display at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.



Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club.

I have lived in Ohio for 50 years. Before my stroke, I worked as a travel agent and I worked part-time as a secretary for a lawyer, in Cleveland. I was also a US Marine. I was a court reporter when I was a Marine.

I participated in the Strokes for Stroke project of the Cleveland Stroke Club. I enjoyed doing this. I couldn't draw like I used to, but I am doing much better since I had the stroke. Because, for a while, I couldn't see well and I couldn't control my hand to write. But now things are much better. I used to enjoy dancing with my husband, so that was goal after my stroke: to dance again.

I think more people should have access to art and music therapy because of the benefits you gain and confidence that you gain.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Joyce Levy,  
4476 Ingleside Road,  
Warrensville Heights, OH 44128  
216-663-0095

Here is my painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project which was facilitated by, Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist.

My painting is on display at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.



Senate Bill 238  
2/21/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,  
Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club. I have been living in Ohio since 1963. I had my stroke in December 17, 2011. Before my stroke I worked as a psychiatric social worker. I specialized in clients with substance abuse and domestic abuse issues. Now I volunteer at Metro to work with new stroke survivors. I am also taking piano lessons. I am trying to get the dexterity back in my fingers and just enjoy learning something new. Now, I have to try to remember how to use the computer.

I used to go to the Art Studio on Fairhill, every Friday, It was very nice. It did cost a lot but I got a discount. It was something that I enjoyed. I did it for a few months. I met a lot of people. When my uncle got sick, I had to stop because I became his caregiver. My other friend would also do the classes with me and my friend asked me to join a team. There was another young lady who was so good. We went to the library and we attended a great presentation. I wasn't artistic but I expressed myself through the art. My grandson could not wait till I got home to see what I was painting. He made me more excited. So, I bought some paintings for him and we painted together.

I have also participated in the Cleveland Stroke Club's art therapy, "Strokes for Stroke" program. After my stroke, I had a vision of all of my family around me and we were sitting under a tree. "Just relax, Katherine, it's going to be fine. They were just celebrating the fact that I was going to be OK. They were just kept assuring me. God had me and my family had me and I was OK." So that is what I painted.

I think Art Therapy is necessary. Now, when I am volunteering at Metro, I meet people who just had strokes. Some of them are very angry or very upset. Some people just want to give up. I just remember that it was difficult, after my stroke, to get services because I was doing well. I kept talking to a nurse, and she said you should go to the Stroke Club and she gave me Geri's number. Geri was nice and talked to me. I started going to meetings. Then I got connected with the Art Studio. Then I felt connected and I started to express myself and it was great. Even though I was better at being articulate, I couldn't write. So, I had to remind myself that I just had to practice writing. Painting and art helped me.

By all means, Art and Music Therapy is very important to express yourself. We have so many people who are suffering and they just need to express themselves. We need to make everything that is available to all the people. People just want to live, to be happy, to be part of things, to be connected. I give back by volunteering at Metro to just listen and encourage and connect people.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Sims  
17507 Walden Avenue Cleveland, OH 44128  
440-600-4845



Here is my painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project, which was facilitated by Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist. My painting is on display at CHSC.



Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am the President of the Cleveland Stroke Club; I also go to Speakeasy at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center as well as music therapy.

I was born in Cleveland Ohio. Before my stroke, I worked as an auto mechanic for the city of Cleveland for 7 years, My stroke happened 5 years ago.

I used to feel sorry for myself after I had my stroke, but then I became a member of the Cleveland stroke Club four years ago. I also joined a class call Speakeasy at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center. Both programs really helped me understand that I'm not alone. They also have music therapy that I take it. It had been a big help—especially with my memory. I also painted a picture in art therapy that is on the wall at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.

I really don't know where I would be, if they had not given me the strength to go on with my life--and take back my life. I understand, now, I can do almost everything but I just do it a different way. These programs are very helpful and useful to anyone who had a stroke or any other problems young and old.

And yes, I can walk again!

Sincerely,  
Linda Davis  
President of the Cleveland Stroke Club

18125 Harvard Ave., Cleveland, OH  
davisli49@yahoo.com

Here is my painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project, which was facilitated by Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist.

My painting is on display at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.





Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club.

My daughter had a stroke in 2005 and then our family joined the Club to support her.

I have lived in Ohio for 69 years. I worked at Ohio Bell in Cleveland.

Since I've been coming to the Stroke Club, music and art therapy has helped a lot of people. I most definitely think it would be helpful if more art and music classes were available to stroke survivors.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lurelean Patterson  
2798 East 126 Street, Cleveland, OH 44120  
216-751-9376

Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club.

I have lived in Ohio for all of my life. Before my stroke, I worked as a social worker and musician (I sang and played keyboard and other instruments). My stroke happened 16 or 17 years ago.

I enjoy singing and I am learning how to play the piano again—my hand is coming back. I love attending the Music in the Circle concerts in Cleveland, again.

Also, as far as I can remember, I always thought about astronomy. My brother got me into astronomy. Neil deGrasse Tyson is one of my heroes. One of the best things about recovery is being able to study astronomy again.

I participated in the Cleveland Stroke Club's art therapy, Strokes for Stroke Program. I enjoyed working on this project. I am now working on decorating my house using an astronomy theme.

Art and music are very important to survivors to inspire them to pursue their interests.

Sincerely,  
Malcolm Gordon  
10712 Olivet Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44108  
216-482-0861  
mgordon10712@gmail.com

Here is my painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project, which was facilitated by Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist.

My painting is on display at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.



Senate Bill 238  
2/20/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club and Speak Easy.

I am a Ph.D. Nuclear Physicist. I have lived in Cleveland about 20 years. I had my stroke in August 2017.

My interests are: astronomy, brewing, teaching my wife to cook, computers, and science fiction. Four years ago. I am proud of a recent achievement: I discovered a pulsar for which I received an award and was referenced in a journal article.

I have received music therapy to help me improve my gait and speech. Dwyer Conklyn has been my music therapists for about 4 years. I see him 3 times a week: on Mondays in his music and speech group, Wednesdays he comes to our house to help me with gait, and on Fridays he hosts a music and exercise group. I really like working with him. Music therapy and Speech classes are fun and they have helped me improve my memory and breath control. Music and exercise classes have helped me move my whole body better.

Thanks to music therapy, I exercise routinely and I give speeches about beer and astronomy at the Stroke Club and Speak Easy.

I really think there should be more programs available to more people. I think licensing should help the therapists, the therapy schools, and their clients. I encourage the state to do whatever is possible to bring music into every community.

Sincerely,

Roger Gulbranson, Ph.D.  
29232 Armadale Ave.  
Wickliffe, OH 44092  
440-944-6794  
roger@gulbranson.com

Senate Bill 238  
2/19/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club, the Cleveland Sight Center, the National Federation of the Blind, and St. Augustus Senior Center.

I have lived in Ohio for 69 years. I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club to support my sister who had her stroke in 2005. I worked for the Cleveland Municipal schools. Although I am legally blind, I am an avid crafts person: I sew, crochet, paint, draw, make holiday decorations, arrange flowers, etc.

At the Cleveland Sight Center, we have had music and art therapy and it was for people with different disabilities. I also participated in the Cleveland Stroke Club's art therapy projects.

I think art & music therapy are important to help you move. For example, my hands are stiff from arthritis and by doing art and music makes you move your fingers and loosen the stiffness of your hands. I think art and music therapy should be offered to people of different disabilities. Music and art make people move, so they are more flexible. It helps to lift people's moods: if you sit in your house you can become very depressed, doing nothing. It helps people express themselves. If you can't talk with a person about yourself, you can paint a picture.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Patterson  
251 E. 200th St., Euclid, OH 44119  
216-273-7231

Here is my painting for the Cleveland Stroke Club's Strokes for Stroke Project, which was facilitated by Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist.

My painting is on display at the Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.



Senate Bill 238  
2/14/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club, and a past member of the Mentor Rotary Club

I have lived in Ohio all of my life, having experienced stroke almost first hand, my sister had her stroke at the age of 50 and lived another 15 years, even returning to work, although not to her original job with Lake County. I know for a fact that patients with aphasia often never get their speech back, having said that, music can be a wonderful escape from that because often times you can sing even though you cannot speak.

I am lucky enough to be part of this great group of folks at the Cleveland Stroke Club and also lucky to have a nephew using music therapy at a local hospital ----so you can see this is very important not just to me but to all the folks struggling to get some sort of normal back into their lives.

All of us need normal, some of us are lucky enough to go through life with normal and then there are stroke victims----that need normal----please use this letter to help fulfill those aspirations.

Thanking you in advance,

Victoria V. Curtis  
Caregiver of a Stroke Victim  
833 Mentor Avenue  
Painesville, OH 44077  
[murrayestate@sbcglobal.net](mailto:murrayestate@sbcglobal.net)  
440-255-0748

Senate Bill 238  
2/17/2020

Dear Chairman McColley and members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee.

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.

I am writing on behalf of my husband, Dan, a lifelong resident of Ohio, who due to a stroke suffered in 1995 is unable to write on his own. Dan is a member of the Cleveland Stroke Club and Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center's "SpeakEasy" group.

Through these groups he has been able to experience art and music therapy which enhanced his life, connected him to others and brought satisfaction.

While these therapies may seem insignificant to others they are an important life experience to many and add much to their lives

Sincerely,

Vivien Sekeres  
5099 Edenhurst Rd.  
Lyndhurst, OH 44124  
danvivien@ameritech.net

## Senate Bill 238

2/16/2020

**Dear Chairman McColley and the members of the Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee,**

**Please accept this letter in support of Senate Bill 238.**

I am a member of both the Cleveland Stroke Club and the Speak Easy Group at Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center. Katie Kern-Pilch is the beloved art therapists for both groups. Dwyer Conklyn is the therapist who also serves both groups with classes in Music & Exercise and Music & Speech.

Words cannot explain the impact of art and music therapy on both the stroke survivors and caregivers of these groups. We know first-hand the frustration and anguish of not being able to communicate. When we cannot express their feelings, especially after a traumatic brain injury they either implode or explode. Stroke survivors have complex lives that need complex sentences. Even simple questions like, "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" is complex because our families include half-siblings, adopted siblings, and siblings who have passed. When vocabulary and the ability to form words are limited, our ability to respond fully and truthfully is nearly impossible. When friends are aware of our limitations, they try not to frustrate us, so we become invisible and isolated. For many of us, our only means of fully communicating ideas and emotions and concepts is through art and music.

If you want to see some examples of how Katie Kern-Pilch and the Art Studio have helped our members, you just have to look at some of the photographs on our Websites.

1. To see our "Stories of Recovery" organized by Geri Pitts, Exec. Director, of the Cleveland Stroke Club and our member and Art Therapist, Katie Kern-Pilch for the American Heart Association Heart Walk, visit: <https://clevelandstrokeclub.org/art-work-for-art-walk/>
2. At our annual Talent Night our members present their talents and abilities. You will see many pictures of art and music at <https://clevelandstrokeclub.org/talent-night/>

We not only celebrate the arts; we literally exist because of them. For those with brain injuries and their families, the arts are essential to our identities and to the joy in our family life. We wholeheartedly support the licensing, training, and potential to expand the access to these therapies.

Insurance companies and regulators often want to reject out-of-hand the need for various therapies, because of costs and their refusal to look at the literature. The best state of the art research summary on stroke rehab is at: <http://www.ebrsr.com/evidence-review>. Year after year, they distill all of the research findings in major journals and publish their report on-line. As EBRSR research findings show, adults are complex and need different stimuli at different points of the recovery process.

Everyone who has had a stroke or head injury have had the experience of sitting side by side with someone who cannot speak. A little music plays or brushes and canvasses are unpacked or a child or a pet comes into room and the person lights up and words emerge from somewhere deep inside. We need to offer stroke survivors and people with very debilitating, chronic diseases a menu of therapies.

This paradigm fits with the EBRSR findings and frankly, most of the gerontological literature: Adults are complex. One size therapy does not fit all, maybe not even most. If we want our citizens to stay in the community and thrive, Ohio should be able to offer a variety of safe and good therapies to fit the needs of our complex citizens. We should not take the easy road out—to wait for the magic pill or blindly prescribe 10 sessions of cookbook SLP, PT, or OT—simply because they have strong lobbies to prevent licensure of alternative therapies. We need to think more broadly: athletes need coaches, therapists, teachers, fitness instructors, trainers, etc. We have good, well-trained therapists with a variety of expertise doing great work. Let's open doors for them and for survivors who are willing to work hard to maintain their independence.

We know that these alternative therapies are effective (EBRSR) but are they cost-effective? YES! Especially when they are provided in groups, like classrooms, exercise rooms, meeting rooms, or studios—informal environments where survivors of chronic diseases and seniors can work together, socialize, and express themselves, TOGETHER! The Cleveland Stroke Club and Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center host group therapies that cost about \$10/ per person per session. Donations and grants cover those who are not able to pay.

Art Therapists, Music Therapists, and Speech Therapists have demonstrated time and time again, that therapy in groups are the BEST learning vehicles for survivors. Mind, body and emotions are engaged in groups. While one person is performing, others are listening, learning, and supporting. Adults learn best in informal groups, with some instruction followed by participants working together in “hands-on” problem solving.

We want to show appreciation to Katie Kern-Pilch, Art Therapist; The Art Studio; Dwyer Conklyn, Music Therapist; Geri Pitts, SLP and Executive Director of the Cleveland Stroke Club; Jean Nisenbaum, SLP and Asst. Professor at CASE; and Tracy Biller, SLP, the Director of Adult Programming at Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center.

To see our calendar of group therapies visit: [www.clevelandstrokeclub.org](http://www.clevelandstrokeclub.org) and click the first link (Newsletters and calendars). To see our resource list, click the second link. To see our papers, click the third link. BTW: You can see this same approach used by InMotion, a group that offers classes taught by different therapists for persons with Parkinson's. See: <https://beinmotion.org/>.

Sincerely,  
Deborah Felt, Ph.D., Health Care Quality Statistician and Wife of a Stroke Survivor  
29232 Armadale Ave.  
Wickliffe, OH 44092  
440-944-6794