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H.B. 144
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Reported by Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Click and Lorenz

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SUMMARY

- Expands who is eligible for inclusion in the communication disability database maintained by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) so that persons with additional specified disabilities may be included in the database.
- Makes the database available to emergency medical service personnel and firefighters, as well as law enforcement officers, through each countywide 9-1-1 system, in addition to making it available to law enforcement officers through the Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) as in current law.
- Alters the requirements related to the verification form that is used to register persons in the database so that the form may be used by any person with any of the specified disabilities, instead of only communication-related disabilities as in current law.
- Requires database registrants to include their residential address and telephone number on the verification form, in addition to specified information required under current law.
- Requires the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), in addition to DPS and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) as in current law, to make the verification form available on its website.
- Requires OOD and DODD to conduct public outreach concerning the existence of the disability database, including by posting information about the database on their respective websites.
- Names the bill "Keith's Law."

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Background

Under current law, a person with a communication disability may register with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in a database that DPS must maintain.¹ The purpose of the database is to provide real-time information to law enforcement officers concerning an individual's communication disability through the Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS). Thus, during interactions with law enforcement, such as a traffic stop, LEADS will notify an officer that someone in the vehicle may have difficulty communicating. This allows the officer to approach the vehicle in a way that can reduce potential misunderstandings or problems.²

Expansion of database

The bill expands the scope of the database to allow any person with a "disability" to be registered. Under the bill, a disability is an intellectual impairment, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, a serious health impairment, a specific learning impairment (including dyslexia), deaf-blindness, or a mental health condition with symptoms that make it difficult for a person to do certain activities or to interact with others.³

The bill also makes the database available to emergency medical service personnel and firefighters, as well as law enforcement officers, through each countywide 9-1-1 system. A countywide 9-1-1 system must use the database to provide information concerning an individual's disability to local law enforcement officers, emergency medical service personnel, and firefighters that are responding to a 9-1-1 communication concerning that individual. Thus, information from the database will be available both through LEADS and countywide 9-1-1 systems.⁴

Verification form

Under current law, the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) must develop a form to allow people to register with DPS for inclusion in the database. The form requires a person to provide certain information, including their name or the name of the person completing the form on their behalf, a certification that the person has a communication disability, and the license plate number of each vehicle owned, operated, or regularly occupied by the registrant.

¹ In the case of a minor child or ward, registration must be conducted by a parent or guardian.

² R.C. 3304.23 and 5502.08.

³ R.C. 3304.23(A)(2) and 5502.08(B).

⁴ R.C. 5502.08(E).

The bill alters the requirements related to the form so that it may be used to register any person with a disability listed above, instead of only communication disabilities. Additionally, it requires registrants to include their residential address and telephone number on the verification form. Finally, it requires the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), in addition to DPS and OOD as in current law, to make the verification form available on its website.⁵

Public outreach

The bill requires OOD and DODD to conduct public outreach concerning the existence of the disability database, including by posting information about the database on their respective websites.⁶

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	03-03-25
Reported, H. Community Revitalization	05-14-25
Passed by House (89-2)	05-14-25
Reported, S. Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety	06-25-25

ANHB0144RS-136/ks

⁵ R.C. 3304.23(C) and (E)(1).

⁶ R.C. 3304.23(E)(2).