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Testimony as a Proponent, HB 2016

House Committee on Transportation
Richard Proehl, Chairman
January 31, 2017

Chairman Proehl, Vice Chair Francis, Ranking minority member Lusker and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 2016 today.

This bill, which has come to be known as “Joey’s bill”, is named after Joey Weber, a young man who was a constituent of mine. Joey was a person of special needs but was high-functioning enough to live an independent life and even have a driver’s license. His death was a tragic event for everyone involved, and it quite possibly could have been avoided. The incident arose out of a combination of fear and lack of comprehension on Joey’s part and a lack of understanding of Joey’s particular circumstances on the part of law enforcement.

But as tragic as Joey’s death was, perhaps something good can come out of it. Joey was not unique. There are others in our society who are successfully living as contributing members of society and yet face certain challenges of cognition. This bill is a recognition of that fact, and proposes to provide those individuals and their families a means of identifying themselves to law enforcement whenever the need arises. Joey’s passing was extremely unfortunate and avoidable. We must do what we can to prevent similar occurrences in the future and I view HB 2016 as helpful in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to stand for questions.