

Stuart Advances Bill to Ease Interactions Between Police and People with Communication Disorders

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Law enforcement would be better able to identify and interact with individuals with communication impairments under legislation introduced by state Rep. Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, which received bipartisan approval from the House Appropriations-Public Safety Committee.

“As they work to protect our community, police officers often have to make split-second, life-or-death decisions,” said Stuart. “When a police encounter involves a vulnerable person with a communication disorder, it’s important for the officer to know early on that the situation may need to be handled with extra care.”

Under Stuart’s House Bill 3822, adults with a diagnosed communication disability, or parents of a child with a communication disability, can opt in to a registry with the Department of State Police. The database would be readily accessible to officers in the field, helping inform and guide their decision-making when interacting with individuals who may have trouble following directions, be sensitive to an emergency vehicle’s lights and sirens or display certain behaviors that could be misinterpreted by an officer.

“This legislation aims to make traffic stops and other interactions safer for both the officer and the individual involved,” said Stuart. “We’ve seen a greater focus on comprehensive police training to build better relationships between police and community members, and helping officers interact with those with communication disorders will further that goal.”

For more information, please contact Stuart’s constituent service office at 618-365-6650 or RepKatieStuart@gmail.com.