

Money-Burge Act is now law

Strickland signs bill that allows adults to register next of kin with BMV.

By Matt Sanctis
Staff Writer

MECHANICSBURG — Nearly one year after David Money died in a car accident in Columbus, his mother made sure he didn't die in vain.

Carmela Wiant, Money's mother, has been working with state lawmakers to create a database that would

allow adults to register their next of kin with the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles in case of an emergency. When Money was killed in the accident, deputies had difficulty finding his next of kin. Wiant, of Mechanicsburg, was eventually told of her son's death over the phone by a hospital employee.

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland signed the bill into law Thursday, May 1.

"I just really felt like David was right there with me," Wiant said after the bill was signed. "We did it."

Once the law takes effect, resi-

dents will be able to provide their next-of-kin information online or when they apply for a driver's license. The Money-Burge Act was named after Wiant's son and Steve Burge, a Columbus-area man who died in a separate crash.

Keith Dailey, a spokesman for Strickland, said it should be fairly easy to create the database, and it should not be expensive for the state.

"(Strickland) believes that this bill provides residents with a reasonable opportunity if they choose to indicate the individual they would want con-

tacted in the unfortunate case of an emergency situation," he said.

While the process was emotionally draining for Wiant, she said she used her son as inspiration to continue. She hopes the law will prevent other families from going through the same situation she did a year ago, Wiant said.

"I would look at his pictures and say, 'what if the tables were turned?'" she said. "To see it through to the end is just unbelievably awesome."

Contact this reporter at (937) 328-0355 or msanctis@coxohio.com.