

Testimony on HB 230

June 20, 2017

Good afternoon Chairman Young, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 230.

I give immense credit to my recently deceased wife for providing me with the "**thoughts, inspiration**" and "**words**" to begin this endeavor.

I wish to personally and with great pride say "thank you" for taking your valuable time and willingness from a constituent to read my letter regarding the "Thin Blue Line" American Flag.

On May 31, 2007, I proudly retired as a Sergeant from the City of Columbus Division of Police. I devoted (28) twenty eight-years of loyal and faithful servitude to the citizens and visitors of our great city. During these years, I was honored to have been presented with many awards. Unfortunately, I also had my share of injuries/illnesses. On a few occasions, I was hospitalized in critical condition and sometimes on a ventilator in the Intensive Care Unit at Riverside Hospital. But, when I recovered, I placed my badge back on my "white" shirt and returned from where I came from.

During the month of June in the year of 2016, I placed a "Thin Blue Line" Flag on the outside of my front patio fence.

As the season came to an end, the Flag was removed and properly stored.

On or about April 12, 2017, I rehung the "Thin Blue Line" Flag.

To myself, as a retired and presently handicapped Law Enforcement Officer, the "Thin Blue Line" flag represents many things to me as an individual. It represents a visual reminder of "**all**" police officers who form the "Thin Blue Line" between the "**innocent**" and "**criminals**." The design of the Flag shows a "**Thin Blue Line**" as a "**stripe**" in the "**stars and stripes**," which proudly represents the "**American Flag**."

With the deaths/illnesses of so many truly professional police officers throughout the United States protecting "**all**" individuals they most likely had never met before, the "Thin Blue Line" Flag provides those individuals from all walks of life a personally proud opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women in "**Blue**." It's an "**honorable**" action for every citizen, especially police officers and family members, the precise manner to give tribute to all Law Enforcement officers.

Very recently, it has been brought to my attention from a fellow Association Board Member that a "Formal Complaint" had just been filed against myself because my "Thin Blue Line" Flag is in violation of the Associations' Bylaws and Declaration.

The primary reason is because according to the condominium's Property Manager BJ Myers, who has driven by and examined my flag, had determined "Thin Blue Line" Flag was **"not"** an **"American Flag."** Hence, it is a violation and must be removed immediately.

If I failed to remove it, I faced assessment fines. If, I failed to pay my fines, then a **"Lien"** and **"Foreclosure"** actions would be commenced against myself. In addition, I would be responsible per the Condo's Declarations to pay the Association's Legal Bills.

My personal thought(s), at that immediate time was to **"take a stand"** and fight for what I firmly believe was the right thing to do.

On November 16, 2016, Mr. Richard Marshall, husband of Evelyn Marshall (Association Secretary) stood in the street and obtained a few photos of my "Thin Blue Line" Flag.

On April 10, 2017, Mr. Marshall in a Hearing stood in front of a Court of Common Pleas Magistrate stating over and over that he obtained these photos to file a formal complaint against myself because I had "desecrated" the American Flag by painting a blue line across the middle of the Flag.

As others (military personnel, etc) have given their lives to protect our freedom from harm's way, they did so by flying their own branch of the American Flag. Law Enforcement officers are no different.

The **"death, injuries, illnesses"** suffered by our men and women in Law Enforcement, which also strongly represents those still on active duty and especially to those of us who were able to retire, the "Thin Blue Line" American Flag represents everybody.

I would like to end by bring forth the Columbus Division of Police Code of Ethics:

As an employee of the Columbus Division of Police, I will obey the rules, regulations, duties and responsibilities of my position, and my oath as an officer by acting at all times in an ethical and trustworthy manner and by making decisions based on the values of our organization.

I will exhibit professionalism by:

- dedicating myself to achieving the safety and security of the people in my community
- using discretion wisely and making decisions that are reasonable, fair, and impartial
- completing my responsibilities and tasks to the best of my abilities
- being self-motivated, independent, and taking every opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence

I will exhibit respect by:

- acting in such a way to protect life and maintain peace and order
- defending justice, liberty, the innocent, and the rights of all
- treating everyone with dignity, compassion, and civility no matter their conduct, circumstances in life, or social status

- acting in a manner that reflects honor on me, my loved ones, my organization, and the City of Columbus

Therefore, I am respectfully and sincerely requesting your immediate attention and personal assistance on representing all Law Enforcement Officers whether dead and/or alive, to keep and fly with pride the "Thin Blue Line" American Flag.

Respectfully,

Retired CPD Sgt. Daniel J. Guthrie