



**Representative Hearcel F. Craig**  
**26<sup>th</sup> House District**

**House Criminal Justice Committee**  
**House Bill 125 Sponsor Testimony**  
**Representatives Hearcel F. Craig and Bill Seitz**  
**March 28, 2017**

Chairman Manning, Vice Chairman Rezabek and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for providing us the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 125. I would also like to thank Representative Bill Seitz for agreeing to be a joint sponsor on this legislation.

House Bill 125 specifies the jurisdiction of municipal and county courts over municipal traffic ordinances and establishes requirements governing fines, fees or other charges for traffic violations and infractions imposed by a municipal corporation that does not have the authority to establish a mayor's court.

During the 129<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, legislation was enacted that abolished mayor's courts for villages with a population under 200 residents. This new law took effect in March 2013 and was intended to eliminate speed traps in villages that used them not for law enforcement purposes, but primarily to raise revenue. However, in response, a central Ohio village found their way around the law by establishing a "civil-violations system," in which fines are paid directly to the village.

Under this new system, village law enforcement has written more than 1,000 traffic citations, some for as much as \$1,500. Under the "civil-violation system", tickets not paid within a certain time frame are charged an additional \$500 penalty. Citations have been written for speeding, suspended licenses and illegal window tints.

Citations are NOT reported to the state BMV nor are they reported to the county court. Administrative hearings are held once a month by the village prosecutor, for those who wish to contest their citation. The village prosecutor has the discretion to uphold the citation, dismiss it or reduce it.

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Our legislation would cap fines, fees and other charges that are in excess of or not included in the local municipal or county court's schedule of fines and costs and specifies the jurisdiction of municipal and county courts over municipal traffic ordinances.

I believe this bill addresses what is a fundamental issue of fairness. This legislation will ensure our citizens are not falling victim to unfair speed traps and abusive and excessive fines governed by a different set of rules beyond what state law prescribes.

We worked on this legislation with the help of the Ohio Judicial Conference, the Ohio Attorney General's office, Franklin County Sheriff's office and the Franklin County Municipal Clerk of Courts.

I would now like to turn the podium over to Representative Seitz, who can describe some of the more interesting citations issued.

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