

October 9, 2017

The Honorable Jeffery S. Rezabek
77 S. High St.
12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Representative Rezabek,

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for House Bill 276 on behalf of AEP Ohio. AEP Ohio is encouraged by and thankful for the additional protections this bill would provide for the men and women who work each day to ensure our customers have access to safe and reliable electric service.

Our top priority is to ensure that each of our employees return home safely to their families each day. They endure the heat of summer, frigid winter temperatures, work with energized electric lines and drive hundreds of miles a week to keep our electrical grid functioning and the lights on. A vast majority of our customers understand and appreciate the difficult work our crews do and show their support when they have the opportunity.

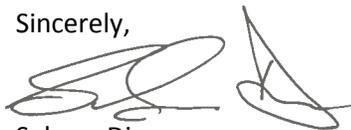
However, there are occasions when our workers are verbally abused, physically threatened and sometimes assaulted. In one recent incident, a member of our meter reading organization was physically assaulted and severely injured while doing his job.

We have instituted internal policies and procedures and trained our workers on how to respond when they feel threatened. Often, once an individual has threatened one of our workers, they continue this behavior in the future. We have been required to obtain police escorts just so our workers can do their jobs.

The measures proposed in H.B. 276 send a clear message to the public and to our workers. It reinforces the message that the services we provide are critical and that our workers should be able to perform their jobs without threat or fear of verbal abuse or physical violence. And it demonstrates to our workers that we value and applaud the tough work they do each day.

Thank you for bringing this issue before the Ohio House of Representatives. AEP Ohio supports H.B. 276 as it is heard in the Criminal Justice Committee and we encourage its passage into law.

Sincerely,



Selwyn Dias

Vice President, Distribution Operations

AEP Ohio