



**LE-AX WATER DISTRICT**  
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October 10, 2017

Support For HB 276

Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Celebrezze and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee

I would like to express my support for HB276, and your efforts to further protect our workers not only out in the field but in the office.

Unfortunately, not every encounter we have with the public is a pleasant one. Many times, the employees are forced into tricky situations of turning off services for nonpayment, denying checks due to returned checks for insufficient funds, credit and debit cards being denied for assorted reasons. At other times, the employees are caught in the middle of family members or neighbor quarreling over property lines, ownership disputes after a divorce. Being a rural water system, our office is remote often time the service location can be even more isolated and without cell phone or radio service.

While we have been fortunate to not have been forced to involve law enforcement in recent years, we have had two situations in the last two months that could have escalated very easily. I have personally been threatened and asked to step outside into the parking lot, over a late bill. On another instance, I was in the field to remove a meter and lock off service with our maintenance crew. While there the home owner arrived speeding down a gravel road and sliding into his drive, proceeding to verbally antagonize the crew.

You are never sure after an encounter with folks who are so worked up just where their thought process might be. Further personal retribution is always a concern. The strengthening of the law protecting the public utility workers of Ohio who provide a valuable commodity is without question a bill we can back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'John Simpson'.

John Simpson  
General Manager