

Committee Assignments:

Finance
Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education – Chair
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security
Higher Education and Workforce Development
State and Local Government
Public Utilities



Commissions/Special Committees:

Veterans' Caucus – Chair
BRAC and Military Affairs Task Force – Chair
Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee
Ohio Third Frontier Commission Advisory Board
Joint Committee on College Affordability
Ohio Latino Affairs Commission

State Representative Rick Perales

Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee

House Bill 622 Judges CCW

Sponsor Testimony

May 22th, 2018

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Becker, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Federalism and Interstate Relations committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 622, which allows judges to carry concealed firearms to and from the workplace in order to protect themselves.

In August 2017, Judge Joseph Bruzzese Jr. of Jefferson County was walking from his vehicle when he was ambushed in a premeditated and deliberate attempt on his life. This attack occurred near the steps of the Jefferson County Court of Common Pleas in Steubenville, OH. Fortunately, Judge Bruzzese was in possession of his personal concealed firearm. He was able to return fire, an action which undoubtedly saved his life as well as the lives of those around him.

In response to this attack, Ohio's judges and magistrates have voiced their concerns over their personal safety. Local jurisdictions have taken matters into their own hands by creating local rules to permit carrying concealed weapons to and from their courts. These actions have created a patchwork of rules unique for every court, and with 323 units across the state, we have the potential for 323

different rules concerning concealed carry of firearms. Furthermore, 2923 of the Ohio Revised Code allows for peace officers and officers of law enforcement agencies and political subdivisions with authorization to carry concealed weapons, but judges and magistrates were unfortunately left out.

House Bill 622 will correct this oversight and eliminate the patchwork of different rules around the state by allowing for transport of concealed firearms for Ohio's judges and magistrates. Under this law, any judge or magistrate who possesses a valid CCW will be permitted to carry their weapon from their private vehicle into their respective judicial facility and vice-a-versa. Facilities will be given the option of how to secure weapons once the firearm is inside the facility.

We must ensure that those who uphold the rule of law in our communities are protected from retaliation and retribution. By denying our judges and magistrates the right to carry a firearm, we are denying them the capabilities to protect themselves, should a horrific incident like the attack at Jefferson County Court happen again. Public service shouldn't be a dangerous occupation, but it all too often is. They are at risk of retaliation for upholding the law and doing the job they were appointed or elected to do. We owe it to the more than 700 judges and 800 magistrates across Ohio who enforce the law of the land to create an avenue for their security.

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Becker, Ranking Member Leland, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 622. I stand ready for your questions.