



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

Written Testimony in Support of SB 208

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Representing the OACP

Thank you, Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Becker, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee.

My name is Chief Heinz von Eckartsberg, and as the Chair of the Legislative Committee for the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, I would like to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 208.

This bill would allow off-duty police officers or BCI investigators to carry a concealed weapon into venues open to the public. These venues would include hotels, restaurants, retail stores, office buildings, amusement parks and sports venues. Only officers and investigators authorized by their agencies to carry weapons in the line of duty are authorized to carry off duty in this bill.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police believes that this bill will provide more safety for the general public by allowing trained law enforcement officers to have the freedom to carry their duty weapons into venues where large numbers of people gather. With the number of active shooter situations in our country increasing at an alarming rate, this will give our law enforcement officers the ability to protect the public in venues where currently they are prohibited from entering if armed.

Current Federal law, under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004, allows for officers to be armed in such venues, unless state law prohibits. This bill would remove those restrictions.

It does not make sense that current law prohibits the very officers that are sworn to protect the public when on duty, from being able to do the same thing when they are off duty. There are many unfortunate examples in recent history of active shooter situations where, if a trained and armed law enforcement officer had been present, lives may have been saved. This bill will put those very officers in a position to be able to protect the public even when off duty.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police is strongly in favor of the Senate Bill 208.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to provide written testimony to the committee.