



Representative Doug Green

66th House District

Representative John M. Rogers

60th House District

Sponsor Testimony- HB 144

Representative Rogers:

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and Members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, both Representative Green and I very much appreciate the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony today on HB 144.

Last year, Rep. Cera and I introduced this same legislation which was subsequently voted out of the House, unanimously, and was then voted out of Committee in the Senate. Unfortunately it failed to be heard on the Senate floor as the general assembly concluded the session.

This year, I am honored to have the assistance of Representative Green jointly sponsoring this bill with me.

As proposed, the legislation would modify Ohio's MoveOver Law to include sanitation workers. At first glance, one may not realize how dangerous and even deadly this occupation can be. In fact, the number one cause of fatalities for sanitation workers nationwide is being struck by an automobile.

A report prepared by the National Institute for Occupation Safety and Health acknowledges the fact that between 1980 and 1992, 45 sanitation workers were killed. Two thirds of these deaths were vehicle related. In 2007, the Bureau of Labor

Statistics noted that refuse and recyclable collectors had a fatality rate of 22 per 100,000.

Fortunately, between 2000 and 2009, there was a reduction in the number of fatalities in large measure because of the industry's promotion of safety. However, since 2010, injury rates and deaths have been on the upswing which in large measure is the result of distractions while driving.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol, recognizing that distraction related accidents were on the rise, began implementing a MoveOver, Slow Down Campaign in February of 2015. This came on the heels of several accidents in Ohio involving people who failed to give vehicles - pulled over on the side of the road, the courtesy of slowing down or moving over into another lane of travel.

Currently, ORC Section 4511.213, Ohio's MoveOver Statute requires that when approaching a stationary public safety vehicle, an emergency vehicle or a roadside service vehicle exhibiting flashing lights, the driver of the motor vehicle is to proceed with caution. Where possible - with regard to the road, weather, and traffic conditions - one is encouraged to change lanes. When the driver is not travelling on a highway where changing of lanes is possible, the driver is to proceed with caution and at a reduced rate of speed.

It is important to remember that the danger a sanitation worker faces is because they are frequently entering and exiting their vehicle into traffic throughout the day. In actuality, theirs can be not only a dangerous occupation, but a hard a thankless one too. Having safeguards in place will help to avoid a tragedy a hopefully save someone's life. Adding this category of worker to our Move Over Law is simply the right thing to do.

While similar legislation is being adopted in other states upon the heels of tragic loss, Ohio, by recognizing this danger and responding by taking this proactive approach would offer added protection for sanitation workers working on our roadways. House Bill 144 again simply amends Ohio's MoveOver law to include sanitation workers and we respectfully ask for your consideration and support. I would like turn the floor over to my colleague Representative Green.

Representative Green:

Let me start by saying I am honored that Representative Rogers has allowed me to be a joint sponsor of House Bill 144 and I hope we can see this to the governor's desk.

There is not much more that I can add to Representative Roger's testimony except to express the urgent need for this legislation. Just two weeks ago in my hometown of Mt. Orab there was an incident in which a Rumpke waste collector was nearly run over and his garbage truck side swiped while he performed his job. Surveillance footage from a nearby establishment captured the incident and it was featured in WLWT, Channel 5 nightly news piece. Both the raw footage and the news piece has been submitted to the committee for your review.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics refuse and recyclable material collectors, as an occupation, ranked fifth among American workers of on the job fatalities, with a total of 33 fatalities in 2015. Rumpke states that aside from this close call four of their collectors have already been hit this year. Fortunately, none involved serious injuries but as the statistics and video shows the next victim may not be so lucky.

Again I am honored to have been invited to be a joint sponsor to this important piece of legislation and I humbly ask for your support.