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Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, Thank you for allowing Representative Cera and I to offer sponsor testimony on HB 341. This legislation would add judges to the list of individuals whose personal information is exempt from public records requests. It would also permit judges to request that a public office redact their addresses from internet records. These common-sense alterations are intended to provide further protection and privacy to our judges and their families.

In current code, there is an extensive list of public service workers whose personal information is not subject to disclosure under the public records law. This list includes parole officers, prosecuting attorneys, correctional employees, federal law-enforcement officers and others. It is certainly understandable why the law protects these public servants' personal and residential information due to the dangerous nature of their duties. It is only fitting that judges be afforded the same protection, especially in light of the events that occurred in Representative Cera's district a few months ago. While this law may not have protected the Honorable Judge Joseph Bruzzese from the violent attack he experienced, ensuring personal information is protected will hopefully make it harder for dangerous individuals to attain the whereabouts of the judges and their families.

It is important to note that House Bill 341 does not create new exceptions for judges in statute but simply adds them to an existing list of personnel exempt from public records, while allowing them to request their personal and familial information be redacted from public websites.

Judges across Ohio are required to make difficult decisions every day in the pursuit of upholding justice and peace in our communities. Fulfilling their duties can potentially put them in dangerous and at times life-threatening situations. House Bill 341 will hopefully make these situations less likely to occur, and provide peace of mind for these honorable public servants and their families.

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Reineke, and Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 341. I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor, Representative Cera for further remarks.

