



Jim Hughes

State Representative, 24th House District

Chairman Brinkman, Vice-Chair Henne, Ranking Member Boccieri, and members of the House Insurance committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on House Bill 621. This legislation would extend benefits to the families of Ohio public safety officers who have died in the line of duty. Current law is inadequate in financially supporting our public servants upon their unfortunate death. This bill will remedy the issue by properly compensating the husbands, wives, and children of our fallen heroes.

Under current law, survivors receive 100 percent of the deceased officer's benefits only until the first eligible date of retirement, which is either 25 years of service or 48 years old. This bill would pay survivors 100 percent of the death benefit through to a full retirement, which is 33 years of service or 70 years old. When full retirement is reached, the benefit would only be reduced to 75 percent of the total monthly salary, rather than the 50 percent as is specified under current law.

Additionally, this legislation would afford to the deceased officer's immediate family the ability to obtain health, vision, and dental insurance through the State of Ohio, as if they were an employee of the state.

This legislation honors those officers who paid the ultimate price by helping to ensure that their families are financially secure. While the debt we owe to fallen officers can never be repaid, passing this legislation is the least we can do as a state to recognize their sacrifice.

This legislation is supported by Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S) and the Fraternal Order of Police. Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify on House Bill 621. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee at this time.

Committees:

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