



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.

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State and Local Government Committee

Testimony on HB 314

February 6, 2018

Good afternoon, Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Kyle Erdeljac and I stand before you today testifying in support of HB 314 on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio. I am proud to represent over 24,000 full time and retired law enforcement professionals who have dedicated their lives to the citizens of Ohio.

I would like to thank Representative Schaffer for introducing HB 314, and FOP member Sean Taylor for bringing this issue to our attention. HB 314 will help alleviate a financial burden from our members. Many officers across the State protect and serve their communities for wages at at or just above minimum wage. Officers should not have to decide between buying gear that could better protect themselves or their communities or buying necessities for their families.

Necessary equipment that is not provided by many agencies include handcuffs, duty weapons, emergency bags, ballistic vests, clip boards and other accessories that all add up to a significant financial burden on our members. For example, if an officer needs to add a weapon light to their firearm—say so they can conduct a building search with a hand free to open doors—they are required to also purchase a new retention holster in addition to the light, which can bring the total over \$300 dollars. The ballistic vests officers wear cost \$300 to \$700, depending on the level of protection. These vests typically last around 5 years before needed to be replaced.

At the end of the day every officer wants to return home to their families and they should not have to increase their daily risk by being burdened to choose between a necessity at work or a necessity at home.

We wholeheartedly believe House Bill 314 would better help keep safe the members of Ohio's Law Enforcement Community.

Thank you for your time and if there are any questions, I will do my best to provide an answer.