



**State Representative  
Thomas E. West**

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy, and the members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today on House Bill 475, the Dallas Swogger Act. This bill seeks to deal with the causes of a recent tragedy in my district that I believe might have been prevented by addressing a small oversight in the Revised Code.

On October 3, 2017, 16 year old student Dallas Swogger passed away from injuries suffered in an accident while he was “skitching” several days earlier. Skitching is the act of holding on to a moving vehicle while skateboarding, and it is incredibly dangerous. In Dallas’ case, he lost control of the board and crashed, hitting his head and causing serious injuries.

By all accounts, Dallas was a great young man who embraced life and enjoyed brightening others’ days. His friends say that his bright smile and enthusiastic approach to life made it hard not to like him.

I believe that House Bill 475 could have helped to prevent this incident. It will create an awareness of the dangers of skitching and will prevent others from engaging in this high-risk behavior.

In Ohio, it is currently illegal to hang onto a vehicle while riding a bicycle, coaster, sled, toy vehicle, or roller skates. Doing so with a skateboard, however, is completely legal. The same discrepancy applies to the prohibition on the operator of a vehicle knowingly permitting a person to hang onto their vehicle.

House Bill 475 addresses this oversight in an effort to focus on awareness and prevention. If this bill becomes law, young people across our state will be made aware of the illegality and danger of skitching. If we are successful in our efforts, parents in Ohio will never again have to experience what the Swogger family is going through.

Thank you again for your time today. I hope that you will join me in supporting this commonsense approach to enhancing the safety of young Ohioans. I look forward to taking your questions.