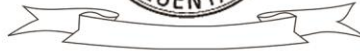


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Thank you Chairman Green, Vice Chair Patton and Ranking Member Sheehy. I'm pleased to introduce a bill that has been before you previously so I'll be brief. This legislation came before you as HB 280 upon request from a constituent of mine. It is reintroduced now as HB 548.

HB 548 is about freedom. Freedom involves choices and that is precisely what this bill allows. This bill offers motorcycle operators the choice of whether or not to use hearing protection in the form of earplugs legally. Under current law in Ohio (4511.84), motorcycle operators are not included in the listing of exemptions to the earplug and earphone restriction.

This causes problems for riders who try to minimize the effect of wind noise and protect their hearing with earplugs since it is currently illegal to use them while operating a motorcycle. This bill would give many Ohioans who ride the opportunity to protect their ears with earplugs while enjoying the riding experience. Earphones would continue to remain illegal with this bill, however earplugs would be available to motorcycle riders.

I'm glad to have ABATE testifying for this legislation and I urge you to consider passing this bill to give our fellow citizens the freedom and opportunity to ride as they choose with the level of protection they desire.

Thank you and I will take questions.