



REP. ANDREW O. BRENNER
REP. TIMOTHY GINTER

Sponsor Testimony on HB 513
House Ways and Means Committee
March 13, 2018

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony on House Bill 513.

House Bill 513 will enhance the homestead exemption for surviving spouses of public service officers killed in the line of duty. The bill states that a “public service officer” is defined as a peace officer, firefighter, EMT, or paramedic. The surviving spouse would receive, upon receipt of an application, a \$50,000 tax exemption on one homestead owned by the surviving spouse. The application must include a letter from a retirement or pension fund and/or from the chief officer of the department or agency which employed the public service officer that affirms that the death of the public service officer happened in the line of duty. Additionally, the bill clarifies that to qualify, a public service officer must either be killed in the line or duty or as a result of a fatal injury sustained while in the line of duty. “Killed in the line of duty” is defined in ORC 742.63 as “Death in the line of duty or death from injury sustained in the line of duty, including heart attack or other fatal injury or illness caused while in the line of duty”. Finally, this exemption would continue for the surviving spouse until his or her death or remarriage.

Our offices have been working with Franklin County Auditor Clarence Mingo and his office to draft this legislation. Auditor Mingo, in a recent dispatch article, referenced research his office has conducted on this topic and the necessity of this legislation. This article can be found here for your reference <http://www.dispatch.com/news/20180208/auditor-wants-tax-break-for-spouses-of-first-responders-killed-on-job>.

Our first responders make so many sacrifices; to themselves, to their families, and sometimes the ultimate sacrifice is paid to keep the public safe. In 2017, Ohio lost five public service officers in the line of duty. This year we lost two additional brave officers in Westerville while responding to a 9-1-1 call. This bill is about giving back to those who make that ultimate sacrifice by providing some relief to their grieving spouses during a difficult time. To honor the men and women who run towards danger and put themselves in harm’s way, day after day, we ask for your favorable consideration of this bill. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Rep. Brenner and I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.