

77 S. High Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
(614) 466-1645  
rep32@ohiohouse.gov

Higher Education— *Ranking Member*  
Primary & Secondary Education  
Economic & Workforce Development  
Broadcast Educational Media Commission

# State Representative Catherine D. Ingram

Sponsor Testimony - House Bill 27  
Civil Justice Committee  
February 19, 2019

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 27. The need for this legislation came to my attention as a result of an incident in Cincinnati a few years ago, as well as several other incidents across the state that have occurred subsequently. In 2015, a local police officer in Cincinnati was involved in an accident with a parked car whose owner was inside the vehicle and sustained injuries. According to the Cincinnati Police Department's own accident report, the "police cruiser failed to maintain control in a curve" and crashed into the recently purchased vehicle.

Under ordinary circumstances between two non-governmental parties, the at-fault party or their insurance would be cited and responsible for damages—but, with the help of state law—specifically, Ohio Revised Code 2744.02—Cincinnati avoided paying out anything and the citizen was left with over \$12,000 in damages, medical bills, and lost wages.

HB 27 will end this unfair—yet legal—practice undertaken by local municipalities avoiding the financial responsibility for vehicular accidents involving municipal vehicles where the municipality was found to be at fault.

The legislation would bring Ohio in line with most states in terms of municipal liability for accidents—including Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. HB 27 protects municipalities when citizens are involved in unlawful activity such as a police chase and cause damage to their own vehicle, but it also provides for a process of restitution to citizens whose property is damaged through no fault of their own. State law already allows municipalities to enter into joint self-insurance pools or liability and self-insurance programs through Ohio Revised Code 2744.08-2744.081. HB27 simply seeks to remove the blanket immunity municipalities currently employ in defense of accidents for which they are at fault.

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Civil Justice Committee, I thank you for your time, and I hope to have the support of the committee behind House Bill 27. I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

---

32<sup>nd</sup> Ohio House District

Camp Washington | College Hill | Downtown | East End | East Price Hill | East Westwood | Millvale  
Mt. Adams | Mt. Airy | Mt. Auburn | Mt. Healthy | North College Hill | North Fairmount | Northside  
Over-the-Rhine | Pendleton | Queensgate | South Cumminsville | South Fairmount | Springfield Township  
Villages at Roll Hill | Walnut Hills | West End | Westwood