



POLICE DEPARTMENT

CITY OF TALLMADGE

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Opposition Testimony to H.B. 27 March 18, 2019

Ohio House of Representatives
House Civil Justice Committee

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee,

I must voice opposition to Ohio House Bill 27 which aims to reduce or eliminate sovereign immunity for police officers while responding to emergencies. This is bad legislation for first responders and will have negative impacts on the communities which we serve.

The job of police officer has become increasingly less attractive to young people. Police Departments locally and across the nation are faced with increasing difficulty in finding qualified candidates. Increasing a police officer's personal liability will only diminish that pool as qualified candidates seek more attractive positions in other fields with less risk to them and their families.

Another consideration is the impact that this legislation would have on our communities in general and specifically victims of crime. This legislation will have the effect of police officers responding to crimes in progress such as; robberies, burglaries, sexual assaults, and domestic violence, with less of a sense of urgency. Those minutes lost will both increase victimization and minimize the risk to criminals of being caught in the act.

An alternative solution to this problem is stricter controls on police management with regard to department policy. I suggest that a better approach to this issue is police accreditation through the Ohio Collaborative in the area of Emergency and Pursuit Driving. In this manner the problem can be effectively addressed without increased personal liability to police officers and with better service provided to our communities.

In making your decision, please consider my opposition to House Bill 27 and the reasoning provided.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Ronald Williams, Chief of Police
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