



**State Representative Thomas E. West
49th Ohio House District**

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 477

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 477.

Too often, individuals who have committed offenses not related to the operation of a motor vehicle are having their licenses suspended – whether that offense be failing to pay a municipal fine in a timely manner, stealing gasoline, low-level drug possession, and so on.

In our view, this is a punishment not befitting of the offense, and it also deprives the individual in question from getting to work, the grocery store, their child's school, and other places critical to their livelihood. In many cases, people in this position are already in dire economic straits. Taking away their ability to drive

creates a vicious cycle which makes it that much harder for them to make a living. This is particularly true for those who live in areas with less reliable access to public transportation.

Our bill, like House Bill 260 from the 132nd General Assembly, would automatically grant limited driving privileges for those offenses that do not involve a motor vehicle. In the event that the offense is failure to pay child support, the individual may apply for and will obtain limited driving privileges, so long as they attend a hearing conducted by a court with jurisdiction over child support orders.

This common-sense legislation would stop the practice of penalizing Ohioans who have not committed an offense involving their vehicle and who cannot afford to go without driving it. HB 477 represents a step in the direction of greater fairness in our justice system for those who need their car to support themselves and their families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this legislation, and I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor, Rep. Kick.