



May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Steve Hambley  
Chair, House Civil Justice Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Hambley and Members of the House Civil Justice Committee,

On behalf of the members of the Ohio News Media Association and Ohio Association of Broadcasters, we are writing to express our support for amendments AM-0833 and AM-0653 to Senate Bill 31. We appreciate the work that Representative Bill Seitz and others have put into these amendments.

Senate Bill 31, *as introduced*, sought to add 'emergency service telecommunicators' to the list of first responders and professionals whose addresses are shielded from disclosure under R.C. 149.43. Amendments added during committee markup in the Senate and House incorporated other individuals including members of the Ohio National Guard and first responders. We understand the need to protect the personally identifiable information of certain individuals and have no objection to the underlying intent of SB 31.

Amendments AM-0833 and AM-0653 represent improvements to laws governing source protections and BWC transparency, respectively. On the subject of protections for sources, it has been a long held standard that reporters cannot be compelled to reveal the name of a source. AM-0833 extends this protection to reporters who work for digital or online-only news outlets. AM-0653 would amend an existing provision in the Ohio Revised Code that allows journalists to obtain records upon request from BWC. Specifically, the amendment would correct an oversight that would ensure the names of claimants are included along with addresses and phone numbers of those claimants in a request.

In closing, we appreciate your work on this legislation and your consideration of these positive amendments. Thank you for your time and commitment to transparency.

Sincerely,

Monica Nieporte  
President & Executive Director  
Ohio News Media Association

Christine Merritt  
President  
Ohio Association of Broadcasters