



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.

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House Criminal Justice Committee

Testimony on House Bill 539

May 28, 2020

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Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Committee,

I am Mike Weinman, a retired Columbus police officer who nows serves as director of government affairs for the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio. Today, I am testifying on behalf of the 25,000 members of the FOP who serve the community's throughout Ohio on the local, state, and federal levels. The FOP supports HB 539, which will give a township police officer if the township they serve permits the authority to enforce traffic offenses on an interstate highway.

Consider that 70 percent of all serious crimes involve a motor vehicle in the United States. There are countless examples of a seemingly minor traffic offense netting murderers, human traffickers, drug smugglers, and more. One of the traffic offenses a township officer will be able to enforce when this bill goes into effect is O.R.C 4511.35/Operating a vehicle on the wrong side of a divided highway or through the dividing space or barrier. Can you imagine witnessing a car hurtling up an interstate highway on the wrong side, and the closest police officer who is in their jurisdiction is prohibited from taking enforcement action?

The change in law will affect townships with a population between 5001 to 50,000. The township trustees must sign off. The township will have to have on and off-ramps in their jurisdiction. And while I wrote tickets using the Columbus City Code, the township officers will be writing their tickets under the Ohio Revised Code.

Township police officers are fully certified peace officers in the State of Ohio. They should not have to rely on others to keep their community safe. Therefore, the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio respectfully asks that you favorably report HB 539.