



**Representatives Plummer and West
Sponsor Testimony, House Bill 441
House Criminal Justice Committee**

Chair Lang, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for giving Vice Chair Plummer and me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 441.

HB 441 would require police officers and emergency medical service personnel to undergo training on identifying and interacting with individuals with dementia. Training for both professions would be comprised of at least two hours of instruction during basic training programs and at least one hour for continuing professional training.

Under the bill, the Attorney General would consult with the Department of Aging to develop rules governing this training, and the training would be required to cover the following seven areas: identifying individuals with dementia, techniques for respectful communication with such individuals, techniques for addressing behavioral symptoms, identifying and reporting abuse or neglect, protocols for contacting caregivers when an individual is found wandering or in an emergency, local

resources available for these individuals, and local or national organizations that can help police or EMS in these situations.

It is no secret that Ohio and the nation are in the midst of a significant demographic shift. A May 2019 cleveland.com analysis of Census Bureau data projects this year's census will show that Ohioans 60 and older outnumber those 20 and younger. According to the Alzheimer's Association of Ohio, about 220,000 Ohioans live with Alzheimer's or other dementias – a number that's expected to grow 20% by 2030 as our population ages. What's more, 50% of individuals with dementia live at home without family or a caregiver, and 60% are prone to wandering.

In light of these trends, the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters even more difficult for Ohioans with dementia, particularly for those living without family or a caregiver. There has never been a more important time for police and first responders to receive this training than during this crisis. The stakes are too high for our loved ones who suffer from this disease. South Carolina, Indiana, Oklahoma and Florida have enacted similar legislation in the past decade – my joint sponsor and I believe that Ohio should join them.

Chair Lang, Ranking Member Leland and members of the committee, thank you again for this opportunity. After Vice Chair Plummer's remarks, we will be happy to answer any questions.