



MIAMI TOWNSHIP FIRE-RESCUE

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April 29, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Representative Tim Schaffer, Chair
Ohio House of Representative's Ways & Means Committee
The Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Support of HB 143

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 143. I serve as the Chief of Miami Township Fire-Rescue in Greene County, a primarily volunteer department providing fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. I also serve as the Chair of the Ohio Fire Chief's Association Volunteer Committee and as President of the Greene County Fire Chiefs Council. I write today to urge the committee's support for House Bill 143.

As you are aware, this Bill would grant State income tax credits to persons who serve as volunteer peace officers, firefighters or emergency medical technicians and who meet certain other requirements. The volunteer fire service in Ohio faces a very real crisis. As I have traveled across the state for the volunteer committee, I have heard the same story time and time again. Chiefs talk of the struggle to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters and EMTs. Increased training standards, expanded duties, an increasing volume of emergency calls and a more transient workforce make the fire service less attractive to volunteers, who traditionally have played a crucial role in community fire departments and annually save municipalities & townships across the state millions in personnel costs. My own department has and continues to struggle with these issues.

The men and women who serve their communities as volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians deserve this tax credit for the service they provide. This tax credit will positively impact recruiting and retaining volunteer first responders. Any benefit or incentive we can provide to potential volunteers is welcomed and will be utilized.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 143.

Sincerely,

Colin S. Altman
Chief