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Written testimony for Brunswick Police Chief Brian Ohlin

In 2013 and again in 2015, Ohio legislative task forces determined in studies that front plates were needed as valuable, cost effective crime fighting tools. Why suddenly four years later is this no longer the case? Well it is still the case.

Removing the front plate reduces the ability to identify a suspect vehicle by 50%. When police are responding to calls from citizens about crimes that are occurring we are constantly checking traffic that is in the area of the reported crime and looking for involved vehicles. A license plate number is a critical piece of information that assists us in identifying suspects and conducting investigations. The criminals are leaving the scenes while police are approaching.

License plate recognition technology allows police officers to determine if a vehicle is associated with a crime or has been stolen. These scanners do not identify individuals. This important crime-fighting technology collects only a picture of a license plate and is able to determine the location and time that picture was taken.

Front plates are also crucial identification tools for Amber and Silver alerts as well as citizens identifying vehicles they summon for ride services like Uber and Lyft.

Not having a front plate makes it more difficult for school bus drivers to identify careless motorists who ignore flashing red lights and pass buses with no regard for the safety of schoolchildren. Motorists' passing by stopped buses is a major problem throughout the state.

This also impacts the ability to catch thieves. A criminal preparing to rob a convenience store doesn't back into a parking space. Without a front plate, it will be much harder for store cameras and witnesses to identify the vehicle involved in such crimes.

Burglars similarly don't back into driveways before they break into homes or steal packages from porches. Without a front plate, it will limit the effectiveness of home surveillance systems.

I strongly urge this committee to approve Senate Bill 179 and send it to the floor of the full Senate for a vote.

