

Testimony by Grove City Police Sgt. Richard Forney

Good morning. I am Sgt. Richard Forney with the Grove City Division of Police. I am here to talk about how crucial the front license plate was in our department's investigation of the 2017 murder of Ohio State University student Reagan Tokes. Reagan's body was discovered in one of our city parks, and the speedy discovery of her car was crucial to identifying, capturing, and convicting her murderer.

To find her car, we went through records of automated license plate readers. Fortunately, a commercial vehicle license plate reader captured the front plate and led us to Reagan's car within 20 hours of finding her body. We secured the car, obtained a search warrant, and began processing it. Inside we found an overturned gas can in the trunk and burn marks on the front seat where someone had attempted to destroy the vehicle and any evidence left inside.

The pivotal piece of evidence recovered from inside the car was a half-smoked cigarette in the back seat. BCI personnel learned of the recovered cigarette butt, and worked throughout the night to process it for DNA. Within just a few hours, they had a positive DNA hit matching Brian Golsby's. BCI informed us of the DNA hit, and a short time later we arrested Golsby at a halfway house

We interviewed Golsby for close to 7 hours, and at one point, he asked us how we found him so quickly. We told him that we found Reagan's car with the cigarette butt he left inside.

Golsby tried to burn the car twice to destroy the evidence but was unsuccessful. He didn't say if he was going to try to burn it again after his failed attempts, but we believe that he was. Luckily - because a license plate reader captured the front plate - we were able to quickly locate the car and prevent that from happening. With overwhelming evidence, Brian Golsby was convicted of Reagan's kidnapping, rape and murder.

We've had front license plates help solve a variety of investigations. With the advancement of video surveillance - both at homes and businesses - many front plates are being captured to help solve crimes.

I worked in law enforcement in Tennessee before moving to Ohio. A front plate is not required there, which severely disadvantages law enforcement. When I came to Ohio, which does require front plates, I have personally seen the many law enforcement benefits of this requirement. It seems reckless to do away with such a proven and effective law enforcement tool.

Front license plates are crucial for law enforcement to keep citizens safe, officers safe, and assist in criminal investigations. To do away with them would be doing the citizens of Ohio and police officers a huge disservice.