October 14, 2015

To: Members of the Ohio House State Government Committee

From: Cheryl Subler, Managing Director of Policy

RE: Interested Parties Testimony for House Bill 240 – Coroner Bill

Chairman Maag, Ranking Minority Member Curtin, and members of the House State Government Committee thank you for the opportunity to give interested parties testimony on House Bill 240. My name is Cheryl Subler, and I am the Managing Director of Policy for the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO).

CCAO would like to thank Representatives Stephen Huffman and Terry Johnson for their efforts in crafting this measure. We also would like to thank David Corey and the Ohio State Coroners Association for their work on this proposal.

In working with the sponsors and other interested parties, House Bill 240 helps to rectify one pressing issue facing some counties in next year’s election -- finding a qualified coroner candidate in every county. House Bill 240 would allow a board of county commissioners to contract with another county’s coroner to perform the functions and duties of a coroner when the coroner dies, resigns, or no one runs for the office. Currently, there is no provision in the Ohio Revised Code to allow a county to contract with another coroner to perform all the statutory services for another county in the absence of a coroner.

CCAO also supports requiring the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction or the Department of Youth Services to pay the costs of an autopsy whenever the death of an inmate happens at a state correctional facility.

In addition, the bill addresses compensation for a very limited number of coroners who are doing specialized work largely on a regional basis.

While CCAO is pleased that these two issues are addressed in HB 240, we have identified the need to identify strategies to better conduct and fund death investigations as part of our conversations with the Ohio State Coroners Association. Sufficient resources for this important function and the challenge of our current county coroner model poses for finding qualified candidates are ongoing challenges for our state.

Chairman Maag and members of the committee, thank you again for giving me opportunity to give interested parties testimony on House Bill 240. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.