



Ohio Senate
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Committees:

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Senate Bill 141 Sponsor Testimony
September 12, 2017

Good morning Chairman Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Minority Member Thomas and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 141, which will abolish the Paulding County Court and its part-time judgeship in order to create the Paulding County Municipal Court with one full-time judge and with jurisdiction within Paulding County.

The problem this legislation is trying to address is simple—there are simply not enough hours in the day for our judge to attend to all necessary matters, not to mention giving citizens' voices an adequate amount of time to be heard and considered when she is forced to work on only a part time basis. This part time schedule has created a backlog of hearings often extending weeks and even months ahead. Given that there is only one judge in this court, this is a pressing problem that I believe needs to be addressed.

In 2012, United State Route 24 was expanded from a two lane highway into a four lane highway. This has greatly increased the flow of traffic through Paulding County. Due to the highway expansion, more law enforcement along this road has been necessary. With the increase in law enforcement officers, the Paulding County Court has seen a substantial increase of tickets, accidents, and moving violations that must be processed through the court.

Along with the record high number of cases involving accidents and moving violations, the court has also seen a significant increase in civil cases and jury trials. The court is only in session three days out of the week and simply does not have enough time to process the increased number of cases and related administrative work. Out of these three days, there is only one available day for jury trials that are already occurring at an increased rate than in previous years.

These factors, along with several others, illustrate the necessity of SB 141 in creating a full-time court in Paulding County. The court system serves a fundamental part of our society and should be equipped with the proper tools and staff to serve the people of Paulding County fairly and promptly. I am in agreement with the Paulding County Commissioners in full support of this legislation and believe it is of utmost importance to guarantee proper, timely justice in the county. Thank you again for inviting me to testify, I am happy to answer any questions.