

Ohio State Government Committee

House District 50

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Maag, Vice Chair Hambly, Ranking Member Boccieri and members of the House State Government Committee.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of house bill 529, the SWAT, and EMT carry bill. The legislation that has been put forward concerning this bill not only addresses something that I have always questioned, but now it will directly impact my life should the bill become law or not. I am a fulltime city firefighter for Mansfield Ohio. A pilot program has recently been established wherein three paramedics (of which I am one) were hired by Mansfield SWAT to function as TEMS medics on all SWAT missions. Those missions include serving warrants, barricade situations, active shooter incidents, mass casualty incidents, as well as any and all joint task force missions.

I recently completed a nationally recognized TEMS school hosted by TRI-MED Tactical, a company based in Portsmouth Virginia who works closely with the SOF medical community. The concept of TEMS is relatively new in the civilian world. We were taught battle-born , tactical medical care that has been proven in combat situations. The heart of the issue is that as a tactical medic, I am required to render "care under fire" or trauma medicine in the hot zone. After talking with members of my team about the issue of whether or not their swat medic should be armed, the overwhelming consensus was that the team would feel better if the medics were armed. There will not be role confusion, as the reasons for being armed don't focus on assault but more for personal protection and for security reasons. It reduces the need for operators to provide "security detail" for one of their own while in the hot zone thus allowing them to stay focused on threat neutralization and the mission at hand. Also the feeling was that if one of them were to be wounded, having the medic also armed provides a great deal of comfort for the operator in knowing that the medic also has their back, beyond just rendering medical care.

I feel very strongly that I should be armed as a SWAT medic. SWAT operations are never static but almost always dynamic and ever-changing. I may be required to run through one hot zone to another, in order to provide care to a civilian casualty or a downed officer. Immediate casualty care is paramount. As an unarmed medic, most times we are posted away from the hot zone in cover or an armored truck waiting to be called on. However, if I were armed I would be of most use placed at the back of the stack making entry with the team to provide immediate care to a downed officer. It is my firm belief that I should have the ability to protect myself if I am required to be in the hot zone, as well as protect a downed officer that I may be rendering care to. Should this bill pass, it will reduce liability for SWAT teams regionally, and it will increase the TEMS mission capability exponentially.

With regards,

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