

Ohio State Government Committee  
House District 50  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Maag, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Bocchieri and members of the House State Government Committee

First of all, I would like to thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of House Bill 529, the SWAT and EMT Carry Bill. This bill is of paramount interest to me because I am a firefighter/paramedic who recently became a tactical paramedic for my local SWAT team. This issue directly impacts my security as well as the security of the other tactical medics during SWAT incidents. Now more than ever police departments are responding to more and more increasingly dangerous calls. Today's common criminal is not the common criminal of 10 years ago or even 5 years ago. Today SWAT not only has to worry about the text book search warrants, drug raids, barricaded suspects and active shooter situations but now the act of terror is becoming more prevalent in the states.

Although TEMS (Tactical Emergency Medical Support) is a newer concept it is imperative that the laws supporting TEMS are proactive and not reactive. TEMS goes beyond the care of traditional EMS. In the past, medical support for high-risk missions had been limited to EMS that usually waited a block or so away from the hot zone. But as time went on we learned that officers and civilians were dying from treatable injuries that were not being attended to immediately. Today's tactical medics follow the SWAT team into the hot zone to provide that immediate life saving care and are exposed to the same threats as the armed SWAT officers. Ideally the thought is the tactical medic will always be protected by SWAT, but in the worst case scenario what if they are not covered?

The idea of arming the tactical medic is not to provide "policing powers" or to create role confusion. Armed or not the medics only priority is his safety and providing life saving treatment. But in the event the medic is no longer covered due to the officer needing to proceed with an active threat or being injured and is unable to provide protection the tactical medic should be able to provide protection to himself and or his patient during direct threat to his or her life. Think of arming the paramedic as giving him a life line or an additional protective measure for himself and his team. Tactical medics are already familiarized and trained with SWAT weapons, why not give them the tool needed to help provide self protection in the worst case scenario.

In closing I would just like to reiterate that the tactical medic has gone through extensive training to become an active tactical medic and arming them is only providing them with a life line to better protect himself and his patient for the worst case scenario on some of the most dangerous missions. I'd like to again thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony and taking the time and consideration to read it.

Sincerely,

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