



# MIKE DEWINE

★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

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**Testimony**  
**Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine**  
**Senate Finance – Corrections Subcommittee**  
**H.B. 64: Main Operating Budget for FY 2016-2017**  
**April 30, 2015**

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairwoman Brown, and members of the Committee -- thank you for the opportunity to discuss the biennial budget request for the Attorney General's Office.

My number one priority as Attorney General is to protect Ohio families. Our office does that in multiple ways. We assist local law enforcement and help investigate and prosecute cases. My office advocates for consumers, seniors, and children. And, we are the legal counsel representing the interests of all of Ohio's state agencies, boards and commissions, and state universities.

The 2016-2017 budget, as proposed in House Bill 64, helps us build on the work we have done over the last four years. Overall, the total proposed budget for the Attorney General's Office is \$274.2 million for fiscal year 2016 and \$276.9 million for fiscal year 2017. The breakdown of funding sources is as follows: 65.6 percent of our proposed budget comes from Dedicated Purpose funds; 17.5 percent from other funding sources; and 16.9 percent from General Revenue Funds.

GRF operating dollars for the Ohio Attorney General's Office have remained flat since FY2010, and I am pleased to tell you that I am not asking for an increase in this biennium. I am here to ask for the same amount -- \$43.1 million -- for each of the next two fiscal years.

The requested budget would allow us to do several things:

First, it would help us strengthen the Bureau of Criminal Investigation -- BCI -- by focusing resources on key laboratory and investigation initiatives. When I took office, turnaround times for DNA analysis stood at 125 days. As of March, 2015, we are at 23 days. Turn-around time for chemistry tests for heroin and other drugs was at 42 days in 2010, and today is down to 18 days.

We have cut turn-around times while at the same time the volume of evidence is going up. DNA has quadrupled from 6,761 samples tested in 2010 to 28,688 samples tested in 2014. BCI's lab analyzed 224,399 pieces of evidence for Ohio law enforcement in 2014, up from 105,280 when I took office in 2011.

In 2014, BCI's Identification Division entered 277,259 criminal offender prints into the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). Also, last year, the Identification Division of BCI processed more than 1.3 million civilian background checks for employers and schools.

In addition, we moved from our existing Bowling Green crime lab to the new BCI laboratory and investigations facility on Bowling Green State University's (BGSU) campus. The new lab opened

its doors in November and is one of only five college campuses in the country to house a crime lab. Our partnership with BGSU has also led to the creation of the Ohio Attorney General's Center for the Future of Forensic Science on Bowling Green's campus, and I thank the General Assembly for funding this endeavor. The Center will help develop cutting-edge forensic science research techniques and will prepare students for careers in forensics, investigations and research.

Now I would like to turn your attention to the testing of the old sexual assault kits. This budget request will also allow us to continue to analyze thousands of these previously untested kits that have been sitting on evidence shelves at police departments across Ohio. As of April 30, 2015, BCI has processed 7,184 kits sent to us from 156 law enforcement agencies around the state as part of my office's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. This DNA testing has led to 2,692 hits in the Combined DNA Index System, and we have sent all investigative lead information back to the investigative agencies. In Cuyahoga County, where we have a special task force with Prosecutor Tim McGinty, 270 defendants have been indicted and dozens have been convicted as a result of the initiative.

Because heroin plagues nearly every community in our state, we would use budget funding to help advance the work of our Heroin Unit, which helps local communities, local law enforcement, and county prosecutors go after the dealers who peddle this poison. Members of our Heroin Unit also help communities with education and prevention strategies.

And, we would use this budget request to target child predators through our Crimes Against Children (CAC) Initiative, which was created to detect, investigate, and prosecute those who victimize our youngest citizens. The CAC Unit actively assists local law enforcement in the pursuit of those who prey on kids.

Further, the budget funding requested will allow our office to help protect Ohio consumers from fraud and unfair business practices, help resolve complaints, and help Ohioans who have been victims of identity theft. Our Identity Theft Unit received 1,342 complaints in 2014, and for the first time, this category is now in the top ten most common complaints my office receives.

We would also use this budget request to help us protect Ohio's seniors. Last year, we launched an Elder Justice Initiative to increase the investigation and prosecution of elder abuse cases and improve victims' access to services. Staff from our Elder Justice Initiative can help local officials with investigations, forensic analysis, case presentation and prosecution, victim services and training and technical assistance. Since the initiative's announcement, we have received many requests for assistance and have opened multiple criminal investigations. Most of the complaints involve financial exploitation of victims 60 years of age or older and losses range between \$2,000 and \$1 million.

We would use budget funding to fight Medicaid fraud, which both can deprive the most vulnerable Ohioans of the care they need and misuse taxpayer resources. I am proud to say that our office's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit ranked first in criminal convictions and second in criminal indictments among all such units nationwide in federal Fiscal Year 2013. Improving the trust between police and the communities they serve is vital to the functioning of our state and the safety of our communities. Equally important is ensuring that officers who

encounter dangerous, life-threatening situations have the knowledge, skills, and judgment necessary to react in an appropriate manner. In December, I convened a diverse advisory group made up of citizens and law enforcement to examine police training in Ohio, with a particular emphasis on community relations, mental health, and use-of-force situations.

The Advisory Group, led by Dr. Reggie Wilkinson, issued its recommendations last week, some of which include:

- Increasing the standards for candidates to be admitted to any basic peace officer training academy to include: a high school GED or equivalent, passing a drug screening, passing a truth verification test, passing a physical fitness test, a psychological evaluation, and adding sex offenses and misdemeanor crimes of violence as disqualifiers.
- Increasing the number of hours of instruction for basic training from the current 605 hours. The report recommends that Basic academies teach implicit bias and procedural justice, and that scenario-based training be added as well as a post academy scenario-based certification exam by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission prior to certification as a peace officer.
- Having the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) conduct a review of the basic training academies in Ohio to ensure the quality of training. The Advisory Group stated in the report that reducing the number of basic academies in the state to a lower number that can be more reasonably managed will help ensure better trained officers. There are currently 62 active peace officer basic academies in Ohio.
- Increasing the training hours for all peace officers to forty hours annually and include community-police relationship training, mental health and de-escalation training, and use of force review. Currently in Ohio, officers are only required to have four hours of annual training. The report also recommends that all law enforcement agencies adopt a use of force policy and that OPOTC create a model use of force policy.

These are just some of the ways we work to help protect Ohio's families. With the help of the General Assembly, we will continue this work.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.

