

Ohio Department of Public Safety
Testimony of Director John Born
Senate Finance-Corrections Sub-Committee
May 7, 2015

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chair Brown and Members of the Finance-Corrections Sub-Committee: I am John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. It is an honor to appear before you today to testify on the operating budget bill for the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to share with you some of our new valuable, life-saving and quality of life improving services with a request that is a flat-funded budget for the next biennium as a result of cost saving measures we have in place and new strategies we will develop.

In fact, cost reductions in the past two years have been part of our overall departmental strategy to become more efficient, and forward-leaning in our operations.

Although the Ohio Department of Public Safety consists of seven divisions, not all of those are covered in the operating budget bill. I would like to briefly tell you about our divisions that are part of this legislation.

The primary mission of the **Ohio Emergency Management Agency** is to coordinate activities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, both natural and man-made. This mission is carried out by closely interfacing with local, state and federal agencies in an effort to bring resources of recovery and support to Ohioans impacted by the disaster.

Ohio EMA agency activities, in addition to disaster response and recovery include: education, training, planning, preparedness, strengthening Ohio's first responder capabilities and improving communication across the state.

In our overall flat-funded budget request, we have asked for funding that would allow us not only to sustain, but even enhance services to local communities supported by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

The proposed funding cuts would result in the reduction of a minimum of four staff members, postponement of facility projects, and a reduction in the number of exercises, such as tabletops, coordinated by EMA.

As EMA is improving its outreach and response capabilities, this would adversely impact this ongoing effort. Most EMA employees' payroll is funded through a 50% federal-state split.

Protecting Ohioans from potential acts of terrorism is central to Public Safety's mission. **Ohio Homeland Security** protects Ohioans from these acts by strengthening the resiliency of Ohio's critical infrastructure and key resources through collaboration with public and private partners to identify vulnerabilities, share information and facilitate the development of protective programs.

It is critically important the Ohio Homeland Security's budget allocation be maintained at the flat-funded amount we originally asked for in earlier testimony and hearings.

There is the very real potential of significant negative consequences to a reduction of the Homeland Security budget.

It would require the reduction of a minimum of three staff members.

These staff members are currently reviewing and analyzing school safety plans and performing infrastructure protection services for the public and private sector.

I will be speaking specifically about their important work in a few minutes as part of my testimony featuring Ohio's comprehensive school safety program.

Through its research, technology, grants administration and programmatic initiatives, the **Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services** serves agencies and communities committed to reducing and preventing crime across Ohio. OCJS administers nearly \$20 million in state and federal criminal justice funding every year.

OCJS identifies justice issues, evaluates programs and develops technology, training and products for criminal justice professionals and communities. OCJS also helps save lives and reduce injuries on Ohio's roads through leadership and partnering efforts with others interested in traffic safety, utilizing the most innovative and efficient methods possible of managing state and federal resources.

With respect to the OCJS budget, we are asking only for what is needed to maintain what is currently funded through the Justice Program Services allocation.

This is an Office of Criminal Justice Services operating fund, of which 82% is used for payroll.

The negative impact of this reduction is this fund pays the salaries of the anti-Trafficking Coordinator, and several other key personnel.

Keeping alcohol and cigarettes out of the hands of young Ohioans is a main focus of the **Ohio Investigative Unit**. Through its enforcement and educational efforts, agents have helped reduce the problem of underage drinking. Agents also investigate food stamp fraud and gambling violations.

Last year, the National Liquor Law Enforcement Association presented the Ohio Investigative Unit with their Liquor Law Enforcement Public Safety Agency of Year Award based on the agency's dedication to reduce alcohol-related fatalities through the trace-back program.

The program allows for immediate response of OIU agents to alcohol-related fatalities that occur on Ohio's roadways. The success of the agency's hard work has contributed to the decline of alcohol-related fatalities in Ohio in recent years, by tracing the source of alcohol after an alcohol-related crash or incident, or a situation involving minors and alcohol.

They also honored OIU Assistant Agent-in-Charge Robert Boldin with the Liquor Law Enforcement Agent of the Year award. Boldin has demonstrated creativity and innovation to enhance the image of liquor law enforcement.

His work in alcohol law enforcement has directly influenced the ways in which Ohio governs gambling. Boldin showed leadership while coordinating more than 100 law enforcement officers and prosecutors in Ohio and in other states to investigate more than 50 separate internet cafes and their operators in Northeast Ohio.

Today I would like to give you details on two new initiatives that are well underway by our divisions covered in this budget bill.

Notably for the next biennium I would like to discuss how the Ohio Emergency Management Agency's 4/72 Project is creating a new, nimble emergency response continuum focused on the state's ability to begin providing for the basic life needs of constituents impacted by an emergency or disaster faster than at any time in Ohio history.

Then, I will cover how Ohio Homeland Security is making Ohio schools and workplaces safer.

These efforts are designed to provide valuable, life-saving and quality of life improving services.

Starting with the **4/72 Project**; the fundamental objective here is to create a nimble emergency response continuum focused on the State's ability to begin providing for the basic life needs of your constituents impacted by an emergency or disaster.

With this plan, in coordination with state, county, local and private sector partners, we can begin moving essential resources within four hours of an incident and we will be able to sustain the effort for 72 hours; which is the threshold of time before which federal assets are available in most emergencies.

One area of specific emphasis for us is to fill gaps for resources that take longer to mobilize.

So, why is the 4/72 Project needed?

As an illustrative example, last August you'll remember the Toledo municipal water system issued a tap water ban due to elevated levels of microcystin from a harmful algae bloom on Lake Erie that contaminated the city's raw water intake.

The State Emergency Operation Center was activated, and numerous state agencies participated in the coordinated state response.

Three observations from that incident formed the impetus of the 4/72 Project.

First, some resources take longer to mobilize. It became clear early on that the state needs a strategy to minimize the limitations of some agencies and maximize the capabilities of others.

Second, some agencies have resources and capabilities of which we were unaware. For example, the Ohio Department of Health has warehouse space in the Columbus area to store leftover water, as well as enclosed trailers, and the ability to transport water in an emergency.

And third, the private sector provided water and other resources faster than the state and was receptive to an integrated logistics supply system.

Learning from that incident, and others around the state and country, here are three things we are doing.

First, Ohio Homeland Security is developing a program through which we will be **Credentialing Ohio Public Private Partnership (OP3) members**. We currently have more than 150 private sector organizations that have indicated their willingness to work with us as necessary when emergencies hit Ohio.

With credentials, OP3 member organizations should be able to cross emergency lines to deliver stockpile supplies as well as medication for people who are not able to get their own medication.

The second thing we did is the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, in partnership with the Ohio National Guard, worked on a comprehensive **Logistics mapping** component.

We have identified and specifically mapped other state agencies' and private sector partners' logistical capabilities to provide resources during emergencies, including vital life-sustaining items such as water, food and shelter.

Among others, the Ohio National Guard, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, Ohio Department of Administrative Services and OP3 member organizations are part of the over 4/72 Project plan.

And the third item we did is a **Gap analysis** by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency so we have clearly identified Ohio's ability to quickly meet basic life needs following an emergency event.

Included in this gap analysis is documentation for public agencies and OP3 members of stockpile items – including the availability, delivery mechanism and timelines, and replenishment timelines for critical items. We also have a directory of Priority and Emergency contact information for all those stockpile resources.

In evaluating gaps and how to fill them, we have developed recommendations and strategic options on how to establish a state stockpile; looking at the possibility of contracting with a vendor to hold or manage a stockpile; working with vendors for emergency purchase contracts or priority service agreements; and other purchasing and procurement strategies identified by Ohio EMA and the Ohio Department of Administrative Services.

The end product of everything I have described over the past few minutes is a **Logistics Playbook for State Policymakers** maintained by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

In collaboration with other state agency partners and OP3 members, the Logistics Playbook features maps to visually depict collective capabilities and resources, and it also shows time intervals for resources to be mobilized, on-site, re-supplied and sustained for the duration of an emergency or incident.

This playbook is available for use by all state agency heads, governor's staff and OP3 members to ensure decision-makers are operating from the same base of understanding.

And that brings me to the second innovation I want to tell you about, which also incorporates technology that is making Ohio schools and workplaces safer.

Ohio Homeland Security is making great in-roads in this area and is positioned to enhance its work this year.

As a little bit of background, homeland security analysts provide analytical and threat assessment support to the Strategic Analysis and Information Center, which is also known as the Fusion Center as well as to the Hub, located at the state emergency operations center.

If you are interested in touring either of the facilities, we would be happy to make those arrangements.

These analysts are focusing on the Ohio Safer Schools Program by reviewing Ohio schools' emergency management safety plans to provide guidance to school administrators on how to further develop and improve their plans to ensure best safety practices are implemented.

As I testified earlier, House budget cuts would result in the reduction of a minimum of three staff members who are currently reviewing and analyzing school safety plans and performing infrastructure protection services for the public and private sector.

These employees also monitor Ohio Homeland Security's tip line and Strategic Analysis and Information Center inbox. They answer routine Requests for Information, respond to school and workplace threats and suspicious activity reports including coordinating with law enforcement to facilitate the sharing of timely and reliable information related to Homeland Security and Ohio public safety.

I am proud to say more than 1,100 schools have registered for the free **844-SaferOH tip line** that only became available to Ohio Schools a few months ago. As of yesterday, 66 tips had already been received.

This new safety resource, which became a reality in part due to the outstanding commitment and support of Dr. Ross and his staff over at the Ohio Department of Education, is a major component of the Safer Schools Ohio initiative.

844-SaferOH is an anonymous tip line that is available free of charge to every school district and school in Ohio.

The tip line accepts both calls and text messages 24-hours a day, to allow students and adults to anonymously share information with school officials and law enforcement about threats to student safety—whether that involves a threatened mass incident or harm to a single student.

Once a tip is received by the Safer Schools Ohio tip line, homeland security analysts determine whether the concern is a school-related threat of a criminal nature and/or a criminal terrorism-related tip or suspicious activity.

If the threat is of a criminal nature, our staff will then use all available Ohio Homeland Security resources, including the Regional Fusion Centers, Terrorism Liaison Officer Program, local law enforcement liaisons within the Strategic Analysis and Information Center and the Ohio Homeland Security/Department of Education Analyst to notify appropriate partners.

In all cases, tip information is shared with the appropriate partners, who have a need-to-know including, but not limited to:

- Local public safety professionals in the affected areas, such as law enforcement, fire, EMS, or bomb squads;
- Terrorism Liaison Officers in the affected area;
- The Ohio Department of Education representative who is embedded in our fusion center;
- School Resource Officers;
- The Ohio State Highway Patrol's Intelligence Unit;
- Ohio's two regional Fusion Centers;
- The US Department of Homeland Security;

- FBI; and
- Joint Terrorism Task Forces.

Suspicious activity or non-criminal, school-safety concerns like bullying, suspicious behavior or actions discovered on social media, fights between students, and reports of individuals on school grounds who may not have an appropriate reason for being there are routed to the Ohio Department of Education representative, school administrators and local law enforcement.

As part of the Safer School Ohio initiative, Ohio Homeland Security is reviewing and evaluating Ohio schools' emergency management and safety plans to provide guidance to school administrators and officials on how to further develop and improve their plans to ensure best safety practices are implemented. Our analysts have completed full evaluations on more than 650 plans and are assisting schools with threat analysis, mitigation and filling the gaps in information reporting.

This year we also began publishing a quarterly school-related information publication with critical information directly for school administrators, as well as providing assistance during training opportunities and presentations available to all school administrators to further the mission of Safer Schools Ohio.

Ohio Homeland Security personnel are also currently working on Workplace Violence support and threat assessments as outlined in a specific Ohio Department of Public Safety policy on the subject. And the team has developed a new school-related section in the state's secured law enforcement computer system and assisted in drafting statewide state employee and state facility threat policies.

And as a final plug, schools can sign-up for the free tip line at saferschools.ohio.gov.

In closing, I am so proud to be here representing your state public safety agency. We are contributing to a safer Ohio, improving the quality of life for families, and providing a safe place for people to visit and conduct business in all 88 Ohio counties.

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chair Brown, and members of the Sub-Committee, I again thank you for the invitation to share the great ideas and work of the Ohio Department of Public Safety's 3,900 employees.

Representatives from each of our divisions covered in this budget bill have joined me here today, and we will be happy to answer any questions to assist you with the important work you are doing in this sub-committee.

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