



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.

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April 26, 2016

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The Honorable John Eklund
Chairman, Committee on Criminal Justice
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1 Capitol Square, Room 128
Columbus, OH 43215

The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Inc. has a membership of over 25,000 full-time and retired law enforcement professionals. The FOP of Ohio includes municipal law enforcement officers, county deputies, township officers, and officers from most state law enforcement agencies (including BCI, ODNR, OIU, OSP and others).

The FOP is deeply concerned with a proposal to Substitute House Bill 110 regarding the duties of a dispatcher. In the suggestion to HB 110, a dispatcher will be required to relay to a caller that they are entitled to immunity from prosecution for calling in the overdosing of a drug user. Granted the immunity is to be only for a minor drug offense, however, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the dispatcher to determine what amount of illegal drugs the caller has at the location. While this may be addressed in the mandatory, unfunded training the dispatcher is to receive, it opens the dispatcher to potential liability and creates a scenario where officers may be hindered in their investigation should large amounts of illegal drugs be found. This immunity only applies to the first two calls. The dispatcher is not going to know if the caller has exceeded the two calls allowed in the proposal because the bill is silent as to how the number of granted immunities is to be tracked. Finally, in the scenario that the caller doesn't know the difference between an overdose or other medical emergency what are the consequences if the dispatcher doesn't inform the caller of the immunity?

While the FOP understands that the intent of the proposed provision is to inform callers of immunity, we feel that burden should fall elsewhere. Dispatchers across the state are dealing with large volumes of challenging calls. In smaller areas call taking and dispatching are just two of the dispatcher's duties. Granting absolution should not be an additional responsibility of a dispatcher.

Michael Weinman, Director
Government Affairs