



Office of the Ohio Public Defender

250 East Broad Street - Suite 1400
Columbus, Ohio 43215

www.opd.ohio.gov

(614) 466-5394

Fax (614) 752-5167

TIMOTHY YOUNG
State Public Defender

HB 137
House Criminal Justice Committee
Proponent Testimony
May 23, 2017

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 137.

HB 137 is a practical improvement to Ohio's mandatory reporting law, and as such, OPD supports the bill. Though policy priorities differ from lawyer to lawyer, or even through different professions, we all should be able to agree that children are our most vital asset and deserve the most protection our State has to offer.

As defense attorneys, we are bound by a variety ethical rules. We zealously advocate for our clients, the Constitution, and equity while seeking justice for all. We are also mandatory reporters for child abuse and other crimes; regardless of the implications such reporting has for our clients.

HB 137 expands the mandatory reporting laws to protect children by requiring law enforcement to report abuse and/or suspected abuse. Officers are charged with protecting the public and keeping Ohioans safe, especially the smallest among us. The essence of their jobs is identifying and reporting crime; certainly child abuse is something they can identify. The wide range of latitude for interaction with citizens coupled with community presence make law enforcement officers a natural fit on the list of mandatory reporters.

I ask that you protect Ohio's children and favorably report HB 137.