



## ***Medina Township Police Department***

4877 Fenn Road, Medina, Ohio 44256

Phone 330-723-1408 – Non Emergency Dispatch 330-723-5191 – Fax 330-725-7717

<http://mtpd.medinatownship.com/>



*David L. Arbogast, Chief of Police*

September 11, 2017

Chairman Doug Green  
Transportation and Public Safety Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
Columbus, Ohio

Chairman Green and Members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee:

My name is David Arbogast, I am Chief of Police of Medina Township, Medina, Ohio. I have served as Chief of Medina Township since November 1, 2001 and I have devoted 41 years to serving the public as a police officer.

I want to thank Representative Hambley for the ongoing support of law enforcement in making our communities safer. I would also like to thank this committee for your consideration of House Bill 255.

When I started my career in law enforcement on May 10, 1977, my desire was to fulfill the mission of policing to “Protect and Serve”. That protection should include the entire township. Under the current law townships have no jurisdiction on the Interstate Highway System that runs through my township.

When HB. 378 was introduced, it was meant to correct this restriction. While HB 378 was working its way through the system, it was discovered that roadways that were part of the National Highway System were also restricted by this limitation. This was discovered in a suppression hearing in Wadsworth Municipal Court. The limitation on traffic enforcement on roadways that were listed under the National Highway System was eliminated. However the restrictions preventing townships from having jurisdiction on the Interstate System were not changed.

This restriction still prevents us from fully protecting and serving our township. This situation is a public safety issue!



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Let me give you some examples of why we must correct this law. While the cases cited may not be issues on the interstate, they show how this restriction does, in fact, hamper our ability to protect and serve.

Example: Recently, a car crashed into a utility pole with three young men inside. It appeared that this might be a fatal accident. At the same time, a call of a drug overdose at a local motel was dispatched. One minute later a call was dispatched on an accident with no injuries. We requested the Ohio State Highway Patrol take the possible fatal accident. We were advised they did not have a unit available and that we would have to handle the crash. We asked for assistance from the Medina County Sheriff's Office and were told they do not take accident reports. This left us with taking the potential fatal, doing follow up on the overdose at a later time, and allowing the second crash to wait until we had a unit available. If any enforcement action was needed and this was on the Interstate System, the case would be dismissed because we do not have jurisdiction.

Example: We have had numerous reports of theft by using skimmers. On a routine traffic stop it was discovered that the passenger was our suspect in the skimming case. Further investigation discovered that this was a multistate ring and has since led to several other arrests and a money laundering scheme that involves suspects from all over the world.

Example: Yet another traffic stop led to the discovery of occupants were involved in a multistate theft ring of merchandise and stolen identity. This involves crimes from New Jersey to Ohio.

Example: My last example took place on the interstate system with an officer that was working our Criminal Interdiction Program. A large amount of drugs was seized. A motion to suppress hearing was presented in court. Interestingly enough, the drug dealer was cited for a cracked windshield. That section is not listed in the prohibition of traffic laws that we cannot enforce on the Interstate System.

We, as certified police officers who happen to be employed by a township, are restricted from performing the same job as any other officer in the State of Ohio.



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Why should a city or a village have more enforcement rights than a township? The crimes and criminals are the same.

I know that the opposition has advanced the following excuses:

1. You may have to go outside your jurisdiction to get on the interstate.  
**Response:** When I was driving to Columbus this morning I lost count of the number of times I came into and out of Columbus. If I was going North on Interstate 71, I would find the same situation going to Cleveland.
2. You will just use it to generate money.  
**Response:** That could not be further from the truth. Townships are not allowed to have a Mayors Court and rely on Municipal Courts to hear our cases. We do not create enough income from fines to pay the overtime for officers going to court. Under current law, we would not get any fine money that is generated from the Interstate System.
3. You will spend all of your time on the Interstate System.  
**Response:** I can't speak for other townships, but I have 10 officers, including myself and respond to over 800 calls per month. I would not have time to put an officer doing traffic enforcement on the Interstate System full-time.
4. H.B. 378 was a compromise and we should be satisfied with what we got.  
**Response:** H.B. 378 was proposed to correct the same injustice that we are attempting to correct in H.B. 255. The "compromise" corrected an error that we did not even know existed until the Wadsworth case. That case was after H.B. 378 was introduced. Many bills that are introduced and passed do get reintroduced with adjustments and/or corrections in subsequent sessions to "fix" an injustice. That is what we are attempting to accomplish with H.B. 255.

This is a true, public safety issue and I would hope you can see past the smoke screen to no longer restrict township police departments from truly protecting and serving our community. That is all we are asking for.

Thank you for your time today. If you have any questions, I would be happy to respond to them. I hope you will support this important public safety bill.