



State Representative Thomas West, 49th House District
State Representative Darrell Kick, 70th House District
Sponsor Testimony (As prepared) – House Bill 519

West

Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Patton, Ranking Member Sheehy, and fellow members of the House Transportation Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 519, which would create the Ohio Council on Transportation Technology.

Earlier this year, Governor Kasich signed an executive order allowing autonomous vehicle testing on Ohio roads. The order allows companies to test autonomous and driverless vehicles on all public roads in our state.

The governor did this with hopes that Ohio can lead in the autonomous vehicle industry, creating jobs and making our roads safer. Right now the governor's initiative is ramping up projects through the Department of Transportation in places like Marysville, where technology is being tested and data is being collected. The technology is here, whether we're ready for it or not – and we have an important role to play. Additionally, according to NCSL, twenty-nine states have already enacted legislation related to autonomous vehicles.

The sooner we begin, the more our state and our people can benefit from these vehicles of the future. We need to encourage and ensure the safe development, testing and operation of motor vehicles with autonomous technology on Ohio's public roads.

Ohio has the opportunity to lead on something positive, something that will make our young people want to stay here to work and raise their families, will make our roads safer, and will create jobs. The possibilities are endless, as long as we equip our local governments and communities with the resources and knowledge to take advantage of them. And our bill will help us do just that.

Kick

HB 519 would create a council to make recommendations regarding state policies related to autonomous technology. The council would include representatives of labor unions, transportation technology leaders, the insurance industry, representatives from the House of both parties, an appointee to represent local government interests, the secretary of state or the secretary of state's designee, and members of the Senate from both parties.

The bill states that the council is required to examine and evaluate methods and changes in state policy to ensure Ohio is the world leader in autonomous, driverless, and connected vehicle technology. The council must write a report with recommendations for statewide policy changes and updates. The report must be sent to the governor, secretary of state, president of the senate, speaker of the House of Representatives, director of transportation, the director of public safety, the superintendent of insurance, and the director of commerce. The council would serve without compensation.

The Council on Transportation Technology would act as a critical resource to our state's leaders as we set out to regulate the testing and use of autonomous, connected and driverless vehicle technology. This will allow us to keep pace with emerging technology and be able to hold automated driving systems to federal and state safety standards. The council can also serve as a tool for our state as we figure out how to prepare our transportation network and infrastructure for autonomous and connected vehicles. With the council's help, we can leverage the social, economic and environmental benefits of autonomous and connected vehicles.

Thank you for allowing us to provide testimony on this important legislation. We'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.