



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

Testimony in Support of Am. HB 137

Chief Heinz von Eckartsberg, Dublin Police Department

Representing the OACP

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Member Schiavoni, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

As the current chair of the Legislative Committee of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, I am submitting written testimony in support of Am. HB 137.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police supports this bill making peace officers in Ohio mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Presently, there is no statewide standard by which law enforcement in our state report all suspected child abuse or neglect. Current law does mandate that peace officers report suspected abuse or neglect to a public child protection agency, but only when a report is made directly to the police agency. With Am. HB 137, officers will be required to report suspected child abuse or neglect any time they suspect or see signs of this type of behavior. This practice has the potential to protect and benefit countless children throughout the state. An example of how this new law could provide this protection is as follows:

Often, police are called to homes to investigate domestic violence or dispute situations where children are present. In some instances, the police officers may not observe enough evidence of neglect or abuse to make an arrest, but may see early signs leading them to suspect it is occurring. In those instances, with mandatory reporting, our public child protection agencies could intervene, investigate and potentially prevent future harm or neglect.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police believes this bill will provide an important additional safety net for children in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to provide written testimony to the committee.