



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF
CHIEFS OF POLICE

House Economic & Workforce Development Committee
Proponent Testimony
House Bill 252

Chief George Kral, Toledo Police Department
2nd Vice President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP)
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Good afternoon Chairman Zeltwanger, Vice Chair Powell, and Ranking Member Sobecki, my name is George Kral and I am the Chief of Police for the Toledo Police Department and I also serve as the 2nd Vice President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP). On behalf of OACP, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 252, legislation that would reduce crime in our communities and assist law enforcement officers in protecting our citizens.

Counties across the State of Ohio have experience with blighted properties. This is not unique to any one type of community as blighted parcels and structures exist in urban and rural communities of all sizes. These properties make it difficult for surrounding neighborhoods to experience growth, while posing a safety threat to residents that live in the vicinity. In addition, blighted commercial properties are difficult to police because they serve as havens for crime. OACP members and police officers around the state have countless stories in which tragic accidents and crimes have occurred at blighted properties. Many of these tragedies could have been avoided or averted with additional resources dedicated to the demolition of these sites. It is with these concepts in mind that the OACP recommends the passage of HB 252.

Ohio began to recognize the need to help its communities address blighted properties with the passage of Senate Bill 353, which established a network of county land banks throughout the state. Land banks provide counties with the ability to acquire foreclosed and vacant properties. However, many of the funds were exclusively dedicated to residential properties. While it is important to address blighted residential properties, there are other blighted properties that remain. Commercial properties, due to their size and prominence in our neighborhoods, reflect on the entire community thereby impacting the safety of our families.

OACP appreciates the efforts of the state to address blighted properties but cannot understate the importance of continuing these efforts in order to address additional vacant and forgotten parcels and structures that pose risks to property values, health, and safety of all Ohioans. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of OACP and I will be happy to address any questions from the committee moving forward.

Sincerely,

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