

Ohio Department of Public Safety
Director Tom Stickrath
Substitute House Bill 166
Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee
May 14, 2019

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien, Members of the Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee: I am Tom Stickrath, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. I am pleased to join you today to testify in support of the Department's budget in Substitute House Bill 166.

I am grateful for the work of the General Assembly earlier this year to pass House Bill 62, the Transportation Budget, which funded the Highway Patrol, the Division of Emergency Medical Services, and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Today, we will focus our testimony on the divisions that are funded in the operating budget bill: Ohio Homeland Security, the Ohio Investigative Unit, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA), and the Office of Criminal Justice Services.

I am going to begin by discussing the largest new investment in the Department's operating budget and then other members of our team will provide you with updates on their divisions.

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Moments after taking office, Governor DeWine signed an Executive Order establishing Recovery Ohio, an initiative aimed at strengthening Ohio's efforts to combat the opioid epidemic.

The Governor's budget increases investments in such critical areas as substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. But there is also an important role for the Department of Public Safety and our law enforcement partners. Our focus is on the disruption of the supply of heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamines, and other powerful narcotics that are constantly entering Ohio from other states and countries.

Ohio's drug task forces, 41 of which receive funding from our Office of Criminal Justice Services, play a vital role in keeping our local communities safe. It is imperative that we not only include them in our plan to battle the opioid epidemic, but provide them with support and resources in their efforts. For that reason, this budget includes an additional \$2.5 million in direct support to local drug task forces.

But this budget proposal is more than just funding. Through consultation with local law enforcement agencies, Governor DeWine identified the absence of real-time investigative data sharing as a burden to investigating and prosecuting criminal cases.

With additional investments in this budget, the Department will establish a unique, highly specialized Narcotics Intelligence Center (NIC) consisting of analysts who will be dedicated to assisting the local drug task forces in identifying and disrupting drug trafficking organizations.

The NIC will include a 21st century law enforcement technology infrastructure to share data and ultimately bring state-of-the-art law enforcement analytics to every Ohio law enforcement agency. The first phase of this project will connect all of Ohio's drug task forces in this modernized data sharing platform.

Using this new collective approach, the NIC will be a force multiplier to disrupt criminal enterprises and protect the overall safety of Ohioans.

Next, Assistant Director Karen Huey will provide an update of ongoing efforts at Ohio Homeland Security that will be supported with this budget proposal. Karen serves as the Governor's designated Homeland Security Advisor.

(Assistant Director Huey)

Thank you Director.

Ohio Homeland Security (OHS) is focused on keeping Ohio's citizens and infrastructure safe through collaboration, communication, preparedness, and response.

OHS has enhanced local, statewide and regional intelligence collaboration by building relationships with local representatives through the Intelligence Liaison Officer (ILO) Program.

The ILO Program provides local agencies and first responders with an increased intelligence capability. There are currently 1700+ trained intelligence liaison officers in Ohio. These include police, fire, EMS, healthcare providers, and transportation workers.

Ohio Homeland Security also coordinates the Ohio Public Private Partnership (OP3), which helps gather resources for Ohioans before, during, and after a disaster. OP3 forges strong partnerships between citizens, government, higher education, non-profits, and private business to help communities better prepare for and respond to emergency situations. This program has 820 partners that can be called upon for assistance in an emergency. Homeland Security also operates Ohio's primary fusion center, the STACC, which facilitates the gathering, analysis and sharing of critical information. The STACC operates 24/7, providing our partners with quick, accurate, actionable intelligence and information.

The cyber center within OHS continues to provide tailored services and solutions to local, state and federal partners. The center creates informational products on current threats and vulnerabilities for specific critical infrastructure sectors and best practices for cyber preparedness. Part of this service includes helping to establish procedures to prevent future cyber-attacks.

The Private Investigator Security Guard Services (PISGS) section of OHS continues to assist more than 800 Ohio companies with the licensing and registration of nearly 22,000 employees. PISGS provides a voluntary accreditation program and additional training opportunities to this community to ensure they are equipped with the necessary tools to protect the safety of the citizens of Ohio.

Finally, I want to provide an update on an issue that I know is important to all of you. Ohio Homeland Security is responsible for a number of initiatives related to school safety. Investments in this budget will help to strengthen those efforts.

The P-20 Center for Safety & Security (P-20) within OHS evaluates and assists almost 6,000 school buildings in Ohio with improving emergency operation plans. P-20 also coordinates the operation of the Safer Ohio Tip Line. The tip line is a free resource for all schools to utilize and accepts both calls and texts 24 hours a day. Currently, there are 2,395 school buildings registered.

Additional support for the tip line provided in this budget will enable OHS to disseminate promotional materials to schools for display in their buildings and at events. Increased awareness and use of the tip line allows OHS to identify resource needs and ensure the safety of Ohio's students.

Using advanced analytical tools OHS and ODE will work together to proactively analyze social media outlets as it relates to school safety. These tools will help analysts identify threats to schools and communities and notify the appropriate first responder agencies. This will help mitigate potential threats and increase response time for ongoing threats.

School safety will continue to be a priority in this Administration. We have formed working groups to recommend additional initiatives in areas of school security & vulnerability assessment, emergency management resources for higher education, and student mental health.

At this time, I would like to invite Sima Merick, Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency to share some of the important work we are doing at Ohio EMA.

(Sima Merick)

Thank you Karen.

The primary mission of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency is to coordinate activities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. We do this by working closely with local, state and federal agencies in an effort to bring resources of recovery and support to Ohioans impacted by disaster.

In addition to our state, Ohio EMA has staff located at 5 Regional offices which allows for closer coordination with our county partners. And with a 24 hour Watch Office, we are always on call, ready to respond.

In emergency management the job we do every day is focused on helping people through their worst days.

In February, 2018, 22 counties throughout southern Ohio experienced devastating flooding. After working with our county partners to assess the damage, we applied for and received a federal Public Assistance Declaration in April, 2018. To date, Ohio EMA has overseen \$51 million in state and federal assistance for that incident.

Unfortunately, only a year later, as many of these counties were still recovering, they were again impacted by flooding. Ohio EMA acted quickly and recently received another FEMA Public Assistance Declaration for 21 Southern Ohio counties; the majority of these counties were part of the 2018 declaration as well.

Another important focus at Ohio EMA is preparation for disasters through planning, training, and exercise. We also facilitate and/or participate in exercises like Vigilant Guard 19 which is a U.S. Northern Command and Ohio National Guard statewide exercises. Also, the Ohio EMA Radiological Branch recently completed a two day exercise for the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. Now, I would like to introduce my colleague, Office of Criminal Justice Services Executive Director Karhlton Moore to discuss some key initiatives at OCJS.

(Executive Director Moore)

Thank you Sima.

Mr. Chairman, as you heard in earlier testimony, a major goal of the Department is strengthening collaborative relationships with safety partners, federal, state and local governmental entities, and the private sector.

Two important areas within OCJS demonstrate the success of that effort. The Ohio Collaborative, which focuses on community-police relations, and our anti-human trafficking initiatives.

The Ohio Collaborative is focused on improving community-police relations by finding solutions to the tensions and concerns between community members and the law enforcement agencies that serve them.

This initiative relies on a strong partnership between OCJS and the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board, a 12-person panel of law enforcement experts and community leaders from across Ohio.

Since 2015, the Board has established minimum standards on the use of force (including deadly force), investigation of employee misconduct, recruitment and hiring, community engagement, body-worn cameras, law enforcement tele-communicator training, and bias free policing.

Together with the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, OCJS has worked with nearly 500 law enforcement agencies employing more than 26,000 officers that are either certified or in the certification process.

This means 74-percent of all Ohio's full-time and part-time law enforcement officers are employed by an agency that is engaged in the certification process.

A key component of the collaborative has been, and will continue to be, strong participation from members of the General Assembly. I want to thank Senator Sandra Williams and Representative Phil Plummer who are currently serving as members of the Advisory Board.

Just yesterday Governor DeWine addressed the group to provide his support and appreciation for their important work.

I also want to highlight our efforts related to combatting human trafficking. Since 2014, OCJS has funded regional anti-human trafficking coalitions to increase capacity of local response efforts, raise awareness, and train professionals uniquely positioned to identify victims. Through this partnership 428 victims of trafficking have been identified and referred to trauma-informed services to help rebuild their lives.

In June 2017, OCJS awarded the University of Cincinnati's School of Criminal Justice grant funding to research the prevalence of human trafficking in Ohio with a focus on minors. During the study timeframe, there were 1,032 identified victims (2014-2016) based on the available data. Another 4,209 individuals were deemed at risk.

In the past two years, the anti-trafficking staff has provided human trafficking training to over 3,500 stakeholders, including law enforcement, health care professionals, school personnel and social service providers.

OCJS also works extensively with the Ohio Investigative Unit to equip agents with human trafficking knowledge to identify incidents of labor and sex trafficking and connect victims to appropriate sources.

As the enforcement agency for tobacco, liquor and food stamp fraud, the Ohio Investigative Unit has the unique opportunity to investigate strip clubs, bars, restaurants and other venues for cases of sex and labor trafficking.

Those are just some of the ways the division is working to make Ohio a safer place. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of OCJS.

(Director Stickrath)

Thank you Karhlton.

There are two additional investments in this budget that I want to briefly highlight.

House Bill 166 will allow the Department to provide \$1 million per fiscal year in grants to conduct investigations on sexual assault kit testing results. As you know, the testing of these 14,000 kits was a vitally important issue to then Attorney General DeWine and ensuring that there are adequate resources to investigate and prosecute these cases continues to be a priority for the Governor.

The bill also includes \$500,000 per year for youthful driver safety initiatives. Governor DeWine and I have had many conversations on this topic and I know we will be working with the General Assembly to further explore how we can improve the safety of Ohio's youngest drivers.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate how excited I am about our investments in Recovery Ohio. Predictive analytics is the future of law enforcement.

The investments in this budget will put Ohio on the path to implementing a robust data sharing and analytics component for the benefit of all law enforcement agencies in this state. The Narcotics Intelligence Center will begin by providing these essential tools to our local drug task forces. Through this investment, we will more effectively target and prosecute high level dealers who are trafficking their poison throughout our state.

I also want to recognize our partnership with the Attorney General's Office on this important initiative. We worked together while this bill was in the House to amend the language to highlight that the Recovery Ohio efforts will be a close collaboration between the Department of Public Safety, the Attorney General, and our local law enforcement partners.

Chairman Schuring, Members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. Representatives from our senior staff are here and we are available to answer any of your questions.