OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE, INC.

H.B. 421
Testimony in Opposition
Chief Bruce Pijanowski
Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Bruce Pijanowski. I am the Chief of Police for the City of Delaware, representing the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written opposition testimony on House Bill 421.

OACP has worked with Rep. Smith and other interested parties to secure language in HB 421 that is amenable to all parties involved related to the specific issues involving hospital police. The provisions of HB421 that provide immunity to local governments, police chiefs and sheriffs entering into mutual aid agreements with hospital police fixes a concern that was impacting hospital safety and security. That part of this legislation is something that we have previously supported.

The late introduction of language that redefines the definition of emergency call for all law enforcement is concerning to OACP. Law enforcement engages in many activities that are not "inherently dangerous", but that expose us to greater risk than the public. A theft in progress in not inherently dangerous, but if we want to solve crimes our response time is important. A traffic stop is not inherently dangerous, but often puts officers at risk who are pursuing violators in making that stop, while they maneuver in traffic to catch up to them. There are other examples of how this language is detrimental to public safety, and to our governing bodies and our officers personally.

It is important to recognize that law enforcement officers place themselves at risk and that this risk is an unavoidable part of the job that the general public does not experience. This is why it is important to extend protections. With apologies to Rep. Smith and Rep. Blair, to reduce the liability protections we are currently afforded renders OACP unable to continue to support this legislation.