



**Civil Justice Committee
House Bill 320 Sponsor Testimony
Representatives Thomas West & Casey Weinstein
Darren's Law: False 911 Reports
November 29th, 2022**

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, and Ranking Member Galonski and all members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 320—titled Darren’s Law—which seeks to prevent racially-motivated 9-1-1 calls to law enforcement.

Representative Weinstein accurately illustrated the issues facing the Black community and the necessity of this legislation. The reality that Black Americans are disproportionately targeted by police officers is clearly supported by statistics. Surveys conducted by the United States Department of Justice have confirmed that most Americans, regardless of race, believe that racial profiling is a significant social problem. According to a Gallup Poll released on December 9, 1999, more than half of Americans polled believed that police actively engage in the practice of

racial profiling and, more significantly, 81 percent of them said they disapprove of the practice.

Even more alarming is data recently collected by the Washington Post, which indicates that the rate at which Black Americans are killed by police is more than twice as high as the rate for White Americans. Further, an overwhelming majority of people shot and killed by police are male — over 95 percent, and more than half the victims are between 20 and 40 years old. It is undeniable that racial profiling is an undeniable issue that we must address to protect young Black men, such as Darren Cooper.

This is common-sense legislation that aims to address an obvious flaw in our justice system. As Representative Weinstein noted, this bill does not add or increase criminal penalties, and our primary motive is to empower subjects of racial profiling by providing victims with legal civil recourse. Ultimately, our goal is to discourage unnecessary and harmful 9-1-1 calls in the future and motivate Ohioans to examine their own implicit biases and promote a safer Ohio for everyone. Thank you again for your time and attention, and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.