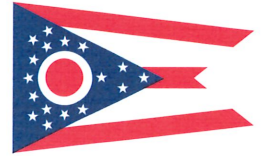




**FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.**

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**Testimony on Amended House Bill 22**

**House Criminal Justice Committee**

**March 17, 2021**

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*Chief Counsel*  
**GWEN CALLENDER**

Chairman LaRe, Vice-Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mike Weinman; I am a retired Columbus police officer who now serves as the director of government affairs for the FOP. I am here today to give proponent testimony on HB 22 on behalf of our 26,000 members.

The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio urges the committee's support of HB 22. The bill expands the offense of obstructing justice to include failure to follow a lawful order, diverting an officer's attention, and throwing an object or substance at an officer. Officers making an arrest or taking other enforcement action are increasingly becoming subject to threats, shoves, kicks, and punches. They are being struck by everything from frozen water bottles, stones, bricks, homemade shields, chemical sprays, fireworks, and laser pointers. In addition, coffee and other liquids have been tossed and dumped on officers.

These attacks might come from one individual or a mob who will circle the officer and seize an opportunity to harass, intimidate and cause physical injury to the officer while they engaged. Officers have had an individual, or individuals, confront them and pull on suspects, resulting in a tug of war between the officer and those interfering with an arrest. During last year's protests/riots, officers were asked why they didn't go in and simply arrest the trouble makers. That is a near-impossible task when the mob encircles officers and interferes; in some cases, the mob will surround the suspect using their bodies or homemade shields to prevent him or her from being taken into custody.

Picture yourselves wrestling on the ground for control of a suspect, not knowing if the arm he has tucked under his body is holding a firearm, then have a group of people shoving you or punching you in the back of the head. For situations like these, the FOP respectfully asks that the committee favorably report HB 22.