



**Written Proponent Testimony HB 22
House Criminal Justice Committee
Colonel Richard Fambro**

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 22.

Law enforcement officers make millions of contacts with citizens across the nation each and every day. Unfortunately, a small percentage of interactions result in assaultive behavior directed toward law enforcement personnel. According to the most recent FBI Uniform Crime Report, 56,034 officers were assaulted while performing their duties in 2019. The rate of officer assault was 11.8 per 100 sworn officers. Statistics revealed nearly 20 percent of the assaults took place when the officer was attempting other arrests. House Bill 22 provides protections to law enforcement officers during this dangerous time and at other times while in performance of their official duties.

Officers are very vulnerable when attempting to make an arrest, especially in the absence of a back-up officer. They must split their focus between the arrestee and any other individuals in the vicinity. This is especially true for state troopers who patrol alone and often find themselves miles from additional backup officers.

House Bill 22 prohibits any interference that inhibits or restricts an officer's control of a subject or detainee. The legislation provides for a protective "halo" around an officer which includes the area within his or her immediate reach. Entering the area or placing an object or substance in the area without the consent of the officer is prohibited under the bill. It also bans diverting or obstructing an officer's attention by throwing objects at or on an officer.

Additionally, the bill expands the offense of obstructing justice to include failure to follow a lawful order from a law enforcement officer. This provision provides the necessary statutory language to prosecute those individuals who simply refuse to comply with lawful orders.

The men and women of law enforcement faithfully protect and serve Ohioans every day. Thanks to the bill sponsors of House Bill 22, they will be afforded additional common sense protections to ensure they go home safe to their families at the end of their tour of duty. I would like to thank Chairman LaRe (also the bill sponsor) and the House Criminal Justice Committee for the opportunity to submit this written testimony and I urge favorable consideration of the legislation.

Respectfully,

Colonel Richard S. Fambro
Superintendent
Ohio State Highway Patrol