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Testimony on House Bill 183

House Criminal Justice Committee

November 18, 2021

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

My name is Mike Weinman, and I am here to give opposition testimony to HB 183 on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Inc. (FOP). I am a retired Columbus police officer who currently serves as the director of government affairs for the FOP. I am proud to represent over 24,000 law enforcement professionals who risk their lives daily protecting members of our communities.

While researching today's testimony, I pulled up each person currently on death row here in Ohio. All of their crimes were horrific—torture, sexual assaults, how they committed their murders. I was shot and paralyzed in the line of duty, and as I lay on the ground, unable to move my legs and right arm, my attacker placed the muzzle of the gun on my forehead and told me to die. This experience, and so many others over my career, should have prepared me for the things I read, but their crimes are both so disturbing and infuriating that they left me deeply troubled. The death penalty is for the worst of the worst. There is no rehabilitation for someone who slaughters a family or tortures, rapes, and beats a child to death.

Two of the people on death row are there as a result of killing police officers. Cleveland police officer Wayne Leon was shot in the face while conducting a traffic stop at a gas station in Cleveland. The round traveled to his spine and proved deadly. His killer was a violent felon with multiple convictions who had been on parole at the time of the killing. Ashtabula police officer William D. Glover Jr. was shot multiple times while trying to arrest a career criminal on warrants. Two of the final shots were less than twelve inches away from the officer. Both men left behind a wife and three children.

The FOP shares the concerns of the prosecutors association. We also believe that a repeal of the death penalty will have catastrophic consequences. We also feel the activists will ask for the law to be retroactive and push to repeal life without parole. The FOP takes its experience with Senate Bill 256 as an example of what may come. SB 256 created a law requiring that juvenile offenders retroactively receive a parole

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hearing. This new law applies to the killer of Niles police officer John Utlak. His 17-year-old killer was convicted and sentenced to 30 years to life. Because of the new law, he receives a parole hearing this year and every five years after that.

The death penalty should be preserved for those offenders who are the worst of the worst. Therefore, the FOP opposes HB 183 and respectfully asks that the committee not advance the bill.