



WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

SB 16

February 8, 2022

Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to write in support of SB 16.

SB 16 would provide protection for emergency service responders and their families by increasing penalties for menacing and assault. The bill would also penalize the obstruction of roadways to prohibit first responders from getting to or leaving an emergency and increases the penalties if these actions occur during a riot, the penalties would be increased. The bill only imposes these penalties on actions that impede public safety and does not apply to protected free speech.

This legislation would also allow an emergency service responder to file a civil lawsuit against a person or an organization that restricts the responder's civil rights in the line of duty. A responder would also be able to file a civil lawsuit against someone for filing a knowingly false complaint.

The bill is intended to deter those who would harm emergency service responders and their families through increased penalties and by enabling a civil remedy when certain actions are taken against a responder. These enhanced protections could serve to help municipalities in the recruitment and retention of local law enforcement officers. We thank Sen. Schaffer for introducing this bill and for recognizing the importance of protecting our protectors.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge for your favorable passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Kent Scarrett  
Executive Director  
Ohio Municipal League