

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON



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PRESIDENT

BEFORE THE HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

REPRESENTATIVE JEFF LARE
CHAIR

TESTIMONY
OF
KERRY A. JACKSON
DIRECTOR OF OFF CAMPUS SAFETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

April 6, 2022

A PUBLIC URBAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY, INSPIRED BY OUR PEOPLE, PLACE AND PROMISES.

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Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written proponent testimony for HB 408 on behalf of The University of Akron. My name is Kerry Jackson, and I am director of off campus safety at The University of Akron (UA).

The University of Akron is one of Ohio's most influential public urban research universities. We serve a diverse population of more than 16,000 students from across the country and around the world, offering unique, top-ranked and in-demand associate, bachelor's, master's, doctoral and professional degree programs in engineering, business, health care, the arts and sciences, education and law. Nationally renowned for our STEM programs, we enjoy strong relationships with industries such as polymers, advanced materials and engineering. In fact, UA was recently named as the top university in the world for polymer science and plastics engineering, according to global ranking site EduRank. Our metropolitan campus, located in the heart of Ohio's fifth-largest city, is surrounded by thousands of businesses, including Fortune 500 companies, giving students access to countless internship, co-op and career opportunities. We also have developed close relationships with the residential communities surrounding campus.

As director of off campus safety, one of my primary duties is to support and implement policies, procedures, and programs that protect the persons and property of our students and residents in communities surrounding UA. I believe that HB 408, specifically its stronger penalties against catalytic converter theft, will increase safety and security in our communities. It will provide peace of mind to our commuter students as well as residents in the neighborhoods surrounding UA. Prior to my current position, I served for a combined 26 years with the Akron Police Department and The University of Akron Police Department, and I have noticed an increase in catalytic converter theft in recent years. This legislation will draw awareness to this costly crime, allow stiffer penalties for those convicted of catalytic converter theft, and close loopholes in Ohio's law that has allowed Ohio to have a higher percentage of catalytic converter theft than other states.

Thank you for allowing me to offer this testimony. I want to commend the bill's sponsor for his desire to highlight this damaging and expensive property crime. As director of off campus safety at UA, I support legislation that makes our communities safe and secure.