

**79<sup>TH</sup> HOUSE DISTRICT**

PARTS OF CLARK COUNTY

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SOUTH CHARLESTON, AND ENON

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**State Representative Kyle Koehler  
Ohio House of Representatives**

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 564.

For the last year, there is one message I have heard again and again, from business owners, local governments, fire departments, and police departments – they cannot find people to work. The staffing issues that arose at the start of the pandemic continue – that’s why I am bringing HB 564 to you today.

Currently, Ohio Law caps part-time employees at 1,500 hours annually for purposes of health care coverage. This translates to roughly 28 hours per week. While this limit is ideal in most circumstances, the persisting staffing issues have made ensuring safe staffing ratios AND abiding by the part-time hour limit extremely challenging for our police and fire departments.

This simple bill temporarily increases the 28 hour per week part-time worker designation to 38 hours per week for small townships, which constitutes a township with less than 50 full-time equivalent employees.

In the process of drafting this bill, I worked with the Ohio Township Association to identify a solution that would provide relief to all townships, large and small. Unfortunately, Affordable Care Act requirements prevent any significant increase in part-time hours for townships with more than 50 full-time equivalent employees. Instead of nixing the bill altogether, we decided that some relief was better than no relief.

The only way for this bill to help our first responders is for it to take effect immediately, thus HB 564 includes an emergency clause. In the same vein, this bill will sunset one year after the effective date.

Finally, language has been added to ensure the bill does not conflict with any current collective bargaining agreements.

I cannot understate how important it is to pass this bill immediately. If we don’t raise the part-time hour limit soon, by September, our local fire and EMS employees will have hit their annual hour limit and will be unable to work.

Thank you all for considering this bill to offer immediate and temporary relief to our first responders. I will gladly stand for questions.