

Senate Bill 152 - Sponsor Testimony

Senator Frank Hoagland

November 9th, 2021

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee – thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony for Senate Bill 152.

This legislation would create the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Task Force within the Attorney General's Office which will consist of 10 employees who will be able to investigate and report on the following:

- Instances of fraud or attempted fraud committed by public officials involving public money
- Instances of waste or abuse, attempted unlawful waste or abuse of public money by public officials
- Instances of fraud or attempted fraud committed by private persons or entities in applying for or obtaining public funds from Ohio, such as benefits, grants, or contracts
- Instances of unlawful waste or abuse or attempted unlawful waste or abuse of public funds obtained from Ohio by private persons or entities.

This legislation is meant to provide the people of Ohio a fair, firm and honest approach to stop criminals from stealing tax payer dollars. Any person would be able to file a complaint with the Task Force alleging any of the potential offenses I had previously listed. The Task Force would cooperate with or refer information to any other state or local agency in Ohio, another state or at the federal level and would not prohibit or infringe upon the ability of any other organization to investigate issues within their own jurisdiction.

Funding for the Task Force would come from the Fraud, Waste and Abuse Task Force Fund – created by this legislation - and appropriate \$3 million in Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 (for a total appropriation of \$6 million). Funds would also come from 10% of any restitution amount the offended must pay.

The State of Ohio reported a multi-million dollar loss due to fraud just during the COVID-19 timeline, alone. This legislation would create a group of individuals who would be able to specifically investigate and report on issues such as this.

Ohio's taxpayers trust their elected officials to handle and appropriate funding in an honest and ethical way – the Task Force would empower Ohio to not only investigate such issues but potentially mitigate future mishandling of such funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 152 and I would be happy to answer any questions, at this time.