



Senators Nathan H. Manning and Nickie J. Antonio
Sponsor Testimony: Senate Bill 339

Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 339. This bill would create a statute that would generally prohibit the installation of an electronic tracking device on someone else's property without the other person's consent.

The idea for this legislation came to us from Lynna Lai, an investigative reporter at WKYC (Channel 3, Cleveland), who investigated the use of devices, such as Apple's AirTags, to stalk and secretly track another person's every move. One such case in the report involved Kar'mell Triplett, a woman from Akron who unknowingly had an AirTag attached to her car and tracked her movements for 24 hours. During the course of the investigation, it was found that Ohio law did not explicitly outlaw the use of electronic tracking devices as a means of stalking. Currently, Ohio law relies on stalking and menacing statutes to address cases of unwanted tracking, but according to the investigation (which included research from Summit County Prosecutor's office) current statute is unclear when it comes to defining a "pattern of conduct" with an electronic device, and thus making application of the law inconsistent.

Senate Bill 339 would establish a new statute, making it clear that knowingly installing a tracking device or tracking application on another person's property without the other person's consent is prohibited. A violation would be a first degree misdemeanor that carries a maximum sentence of 180-days in jail and a maximum fine of \$1000. There is a list of exceptions to this statute that include:

- Law enforcement officers/agencies using devices as part of a criminal investigation.
- Parents and guardians of a minor child.
- Caregivers of an elderly person or disabled adult for the assurance of their well-being, requiring approval from the person's treating physician.
- A person acting in good faith on behalf of a business for a legitimate business purpose.
- An owner or lessee of a motor vehicle who installs or directs the installation of a tracking device.

We note that House Bill 672 also aims to prohibit the installation of electronic tracking devices without consent. That bill adds language onto the “menacing by stalking” statute, while Senate Bill 339 creates a new section of code to specifically address electronic tracking devices in a time when technology has become an integral part of our lives.

Currently, at least twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have addressed privacy concerns raised when individuals track the movements of others without their knowledge. Senate Bill 339 will add Ohio to that list, and hold people who use electronic tracking devices for nefarious purposes accountable for their actions.

Thank you again for allowing me to deliver testimony on Senate Bill 339. We would be glad to answer questions at this time.