

Rep. Tom Patton Sponsor Testimony- HB 27

Senate Judiciary Committee

11/29/22

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and the Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of House Bill 27. House Bill 27 aims to increase the criminal penalties associated with failing to secure a load on a vehicle.

I am sure all of you have had an experience where we had to swerve out of the way of a fallen object, possibly even driving to Columbus to the Statehouse. That can certainly be a dangerous scenario especially if there are other vehicles around you. Currently in Ohio, failure to secure a load (R.C. 4513.31) is a minor misdemeanor (R.C. 4513.99). The fine for violating the prohibition is anywhere up to \$150. There is no increasing fine or penalty currently on the offense. There are some exemptions to the unsecured loads law in Ohio for agriculture vehicles, snow plows, and garbage trucks.

House Bill 27 would increase the fine to \$500 if no physical harm is caused by the violation. Should there be harm to a person or property because of the violation, it would be a third degree misdemeanor, punishable by a \$2,500 fine and any other penalty that may be imposed for a third degree misdemeanor. States around Ohio, such as Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, have fines that go up to or exceed \$500 based on if there was an injury involved. A measly \$150 maximum fine in Ohio does not seem to fit the scale for this violation given the destruction a fallen item might cause to another vehicle or human.

According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, there was a total of 2,791 violations from 2015 to 2019. During this stretch of time, there were 6,259 property damage only crashes while 715 people were injured and six killed.

Chairman Manning and the members of this committee, thank you again for allowing me this testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions now.