



Tim Schaffer
20th District

Ohio Senate
Senate Building
Room 128, First Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-8076
sd20@ohiosenate.gov

Committees:
Agriculture & Natural Resources, Chair
Government Oversight and Reform
Insurance
Transportation

**Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
Senate Bill 299—Sponsor Testimony
Tuesday March 15, 2022**

Chairwoman Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 299.

Senate Bill 299 would increase the annual hour limit for those considered as part time employees in Ohio's townships. This issue was brought to my attention by local fire chiefs in Fairfield County, and I have since worked with Representative Koehler who is sponsoring similar legislation in his chamber after he was contacted by his constituents.

Over the last several years, our townships have struggled with staffing issues, especially when it comes to first responders. These dedicated men and women serve our communities, but with current limits on the definition of part time employees, townships are unable to offer more hours due to Ohio's part time work hour limit. As a result of this, the departments must look to hire more staff and subsequently pay for additional equipment – which increases expenses for the department.

Consequently, townships have large spans of unstaffed hours, putting the public safety of these communities at risk.

It is important to note that current Ohio code and federal code differ in the definition of a part time township employee. A part time township employee in Ohio is one who is hired with the expectation to not work more than 1,500 hours annually. This averages out to just under 29 hours per week on average.

Under the federal Affordable Care Act, employees working for an average of fewer than 30 hours per week are designated as part time. Additionally, the law states that if a "large employer" township – employing at least 50 FTE employees – should fail to pay health coverage to those working over the 30 hour per week limit, the township would be penalized.

In order to cooperate with federal law, but still raise Ohio's part time hour limit, Senate Bill 299 would work in the following two ways:

1. The annual hour limit for part time employees in Ohio's "large employer" townships would be increased to 1,560 hours annually – or 30 hours per week. This is an annual increase of 76 hours for these applicable township employees.
2. For Ohio's townships not designated as "large employers" under the Affordable Care Act, this bill would permit part time employees to work up to 1,976 hours annually or 38 hours per week on average. This would represent an increase of 476 hours, or an extra 9 hours per week.

Furthermore, language was added to the bill to ensure that no provisions within the bill conflict with current collective bargaining agreements.

It is also important to note that this bill has the support of the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association and Ohio Township Association.

Thank you once again Chairwoman Gavarone and members of the committee for the opportunity to present this legislation to you today. I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.