

79TH HOUSE DISTRICT

PARTS OF CLARK COUNTY

INCLUDING: SPRINGFIELD, NEW CARLISLE,
SOUTH CHARLESTON, AND ENON

COMMITTEES

CHAIR: AGRICULTURE & CONSERVATION
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



COLUMBUS OFFICE

VERN RIFFE CENTER
77 SOUTH HIGH STREET 13TH FLOOR
COLUMBUS, OH 43215-0253
PHONE: (614) 466-2038
REP79@OHIOHOUSE.GOV

State Representative Kyle Koehler Ohio House of Representatives

Chairwoman Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 564.

This bill should seem very familiar to you. I know you recently passed a very similar bill sponsored by Senator Tim Schaffer. I believe we both heard from constituents with similar concerns at about the same time earlier this year.

The constituent I heard from, talked about complete 12 hour shifts at a township Fire and EMS station going completely unstaffed because of a shortage of employees to fill the vacancies. Complicating the issue are part-time fire and EMS personnel who, while filling-in, are on a course to hit the 1,500-hour yearly limit for part-time employees.

In trying to relieve this issue for townships, HB 564 temporarily increases the 28 hour per week part-time worker designation to 38 hours per week.

As I started my work on House Bill 564, I became aware of Senator Schaffer working on his bill. Because of the differing dynamics between the House and the Senate – I believe our bills, while very similar, ended up with a few key differences.

Senate Bill 299 deals with ALL part-time employees from BOTH large and small townships (as defined by the Affordable Care Act) and has NO sunset. I believe it passed on a straight party-line vote with an emergency clause.

I agree with the Senate that the bill needs an emergency clause to fix the pressing issue that many townships are facing. We need employees to fill vacancies right now and without the fear that they will hit the max hour limit in September - creating an enormous problem for the last three months of 2022 and 2023.

I worked with the minority caucus and the Ranking Member of the House State and Local Government Committee to garner the 66 votes needed to pass House Bill 564.

To do that, we addressed the most pressing issues. First, we limited it to only small townships of 50 full-time equivalent employees or less, as we have seen that small townships are hit the hardest

77 SOUTH HIGH STREET, COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-6111
www.ohiohouse.gov

79TH HOUSE DISTRICT

PARTS OF CLARK COUNTY

INCLUDING: SPRINGFIELD, NEW CARLISLE,
SOUTH CHARLESTON, AND ENON

COMMITTEES

CHAIR: AGRICULTURE & CONSERVATION
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



COLUMBUS OFFICE

VERN RIFFE CENTER
77 SOUTH HIGH STREET 13TH FLOOR
COLUMBUS, OH 43215-0253
PHONE: (614) 466-2038
REP79@OHIOHOUSE.GOV

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

by this problem. We also limited it so that the change would only affect first-responders, and we limited how long the bill will be in effect. The bill will sunset in December of 2023.

As I told my colleagues in the House, no township has asked us for more money. They simply need the time to figure out staffing in this new post-COVID economy. The change in hours from 1,500 to 1,976 for the next 18 months will do that. Maybe there will be a more permanent change in the future – maybe not. I believe House Bill 564 gives them the time to figure these issues out.

What I do know, is that we need to pass this bill and provide the relief needed so that someone is on duty when you, I or one of our constituents dials 911 – today, tomorrow, and next year.

I have been notified by the minority caucus of the House that Senate Bill 299 will not pass with the needed emergency clause votes in the Ohio House. We can, however, fix the more pressing issues for first responders in small townships for the next 18 months by passing House Bill 564 in the next week, if you so choose Madam Chair.

It should be noted that HB 564 also has an amended provision that deals with facilities belonging to churches and other non-profits that our local board of elections use for training workers. This amendment fixes the issue with board of elections accepting what we might consider an “in-kind” contribution by using these buildings.

Chairwoman, in closing, I ask you to consider House Bill 564 for passage as quickly as possible. While it might sound self-serving... by sending this bill to the Senate as passed by the House, and to the Governor for his signature by the time this month is over, we will immediately provide relief to small townships across Ohio, and allow them to continue to keep our communities safe.

Thank you and I will happily answer any questions you may have.