



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

Rick Butsko, Grove City Police Department

Interested Party Testimony on Senate Bill 23

Representing the OACP

February 23, 2021

Thank you and good morning, Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written interested party testimony on Senate Bill 23.

The Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police is a strong advocate for school bus safety, and we applaud the work of Senator Gavarone with this issue. We would encourage the sponsor and this committee to consider expanding this legislation to include reinstatement of the front license plate, which is a valuable tool for enforcement of this bill.

Automatic license plate readers like those used on school buses are much more effective and efficient when vehicles can be scanned coming and going. The ability to identify drivers passing stopped school bus is twice as high when there are two license plates on a vehicle.

It has been stated in previous testimony that the prevalence of drivers passing stopped school buses continues to increase each year. The safety of our children is of the utmost importance and reinstating a front license plate will assist our professionals operating school buses in keeping our kids safe.

The front license plate was critical in my department's investigation of the 2017 murder of Ohio State University student Reagan Tokes. Reagan's body was discovered in one of our city parks, and the speedy discovery of her car was crucial to identifying, capturing, and convicting her murderer.

To find her car, we went through records of automated license plate readers. Fortunately, a commercial vehicle license plate reader captured the front plate and led us to Reagan's car within 20 hours of finding her body. We secured the car, obtained a search warrant, and began processing it. Inside we found an overturned gas can in the trunk and burn marks on the front seat where someone had attempted to destroy the vehicle and any evidence left inside.

The pivotal piece of evidence recovered from inside the car was a half-smoked cigarette in the back seat. BCI personnel learned of the recovered cigarette butt and worked throughout the night to process it for DNA. Within just a few hours, they had a positive DNA hit matching Brian

Golsby's. BCI informed us of the DNA hit, and a short time later we arrested Golsby at a halfway house

We interviewed Golsby for close to 7 hours, and at one point, he asked us how we found him so quickly. We told him that we found Reagan's car with the cigarette butt he left inside.

Golsby tried to burn the car twice to destroy the evidence but was unsuccessful. He didn't say if he was going to try to burn it again after his failed attempts, but we believe that he was. Luckily - because a license plate reader captured the front plate - we were able to quickly locate the car and prevent that from happening. With overwhelming evidence, Brian Golsby was convicted of Reagan's kidnapping, rape and murder.

We've had front license plates help solve a variety of investigations. With the advancement of video surveillance - both at homes and businesses - many front plates are being captured to help solve crimes. We ask that you reconsider removal of this invaluable tool for school bus safety and law enforcement, which will increase safety for Ohioans of all ages.

Again, I would like to thank Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and, members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee for the opportunity to provide input on this topic, and I hope that the information provided will be helpful in weighing the balance of cost savings, safety, and the actual real and intangible value of the front license plate.