

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 265.

As we move forward as a society, it has become increasingly apparent that new actions must be taken to protect our first responders and their families. I appreciate the protections provided by house bill 46 and “Shielding or Protectors”. First responders are frontline workers who are truly in the public eye. We are here to serve our neighbors and citizens of the communities in which we live and work. This is a calling that should not be taken lightly. Open, transparent, and accountable government is critical to our success as a society. Yet when information such as personal work schedules are readily accessible to anyone, and these schedules easily show patterns of a first responder's time on duty and nights away from home, their families become vulnerable and it becomes necessary to act. In addition to families worrying about their loved ones serving as first responders and often time working throughout the night, they also now must worry about why someone may want to determine when they may be home alone or separated from their loved one who is on duty serving the public. Indeed, administrators and governments need to ensure proper staffing and governance of first responder agencies, but what benefit is one’s personal work schedule in the hands of someone with unknown motives? Harassment, intimidation, or worse? This is a chance that should not be taken with our loved ones.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I welcome any questions that you may have