



STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER OHIO.

209 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309

Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986

Toll Free: 888-757-1904 • www.ccao.org

Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

Ohio House of Representatives Civil Justice Government Committee

House Bill 265

Proponent Testimony

Jon Hofstetter, Wayne County Commissioner

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Matthews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, my name is Jonathan Hofstetter. I have served as a Wayne County Commissioner since January of 2023. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 265 (HB 265) on behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO).

I would like to thank my State Representative Scott Wiggam as well as Representative Thomas Hall, for introducing this important piece of legislation. HB 265 exempts the records and work schedules of designated public service workers from disclosure as a public record. The bill also provides various other exemptions for designated public service workers during the process to request that their records become exempt from public records.

As you may know, it is becoming increasingly difficult to hire and subsequently retain workers in the public safety departments at the county level. I believe that HB 265 will assist counties with retention efforts and help us recruit workers in these important roles through the protections outlined in this bill.

As a firefighter myself, I know how stressful it is to leave your family for 24 hours at a time and put yourself into harm's way. The last



thing I want to think about is if my family is safe while I am gone. Unfortunately, we have seen an uptick in public records requests for schedules of public safety employees. People are using this information to potentially harass the worker's family members while they are away on duty. Public safety workers interact with citizens who either deal with mental health issues or are looking for personal gain through illegal activities which could include intimidation. HB265 would help protect the loved ones of designated public service workers. Ohio's public records laws were meant to allow citizens the ability to hold public servants accountable, not to allow citizens the ability to harass and intimidate.

HB 265 will help address this problem by exempting their address and work schedule from public documents and provide our county workers with peace of mind while they are performing their important job duties.

I would once again like to thank Representative Wiggam and Representative Hall for introducing this legislation and for their support of county workers and their families. I would also like to thank this committee for their time and attention to this important issue.

In closing, I respectfully ask this committee to favorably report House Bill 265. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee at this time.