



**Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
House Bill 328 – Proponent Testimony
House Criminal Justice Committee**

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Criminal Justice committee, my name is Robert Butler, and I am the Chief of Police from Independence, Ohio. I am on the board of Governors for the Cuyahoga County Chiefs of Police, and currently serve as the 2nd Vice President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today on behalf of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police to testify on HB 328 regarding the sale of used catalytic converters.

I want to start my testimony by applauding the work and support of representative Roemer and Plummer on this legislation. When I bring the issue of catalytic converter thefts up to chiefs throughout the state they have shared experiences, and each have dealt with this crime in their cities. This crime does not just affect our state. This year I attended the FBI National Academy with law enforcement leaders from across the world and as we discussed this topic, I learned how states like California, Minnesota, Hawaii, Virginia, and Pennsylvania have passed similar bills to combat the rising theft of catalytic converters.

The passage of this bill would be a proactive approach to combat the rise in catalytic converter thefts throughout the state. For example, the city of Dayton saw a 364% rise in catalytic converter thefts from 2020 to 2022. Across the US it was reported by the National Insurance Crime Bureau that the number stolen in 2020 was 16,600 and in 2022 was at 64,701.

This bill makes the crime an automatic felony of the fifth degree, and it increases the penalty to a felony of the fourth degree on a second offense. This sends a strong message that this type of crime will not be tolerated.

The reason catalytic converters are so sought after is that the precious metals on the inside can be sold for money at a scrap yard. The average catalytic converter has 3 to 7 grams of platinum worth about \$100 – \$250. However, the average cost of this damage is far more expensive, according to Auto Zone a replacement can cost up to \$2500, not including labor. With premiums this can be a costly expense for an Ohioan.

This is a quick crime, done within 30 seconds, allowing the criminals to hit several cars at once and be away from an area before the police are called. Most victims do not realize they have been targeted until the next day, making apprehension difficult. The effects on the victim are far more expensive and time consuming than the theft itself. In the city of Independence, we have

people staying at hotels that wake up to go to work, a conference, or meeting, and they turn on their car only to be stuck due to being victimized by this crime.

The scrap yard provision of the bills is very important, it makes the businesses an ally to the victims of these crimes and to the justice system, not an ally to the criminals looking to profit.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony on behalf of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.