

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of HB 441.

My name is Chris Niekamp and I am a proud parole officer for the State of Ohio serving Lima Region (Mercer County).

Currently Ohio Parole Officers are in PERS, not law enforcement PERS. So, we are not eligible for 25 years and out. All Parole Officers have dangerous job like any law enforcement, yet we are not included in same Retirement system. . Here are 2 instances in last month where Ohio Parole Officers were involved in shootings.

- 1) On 4/16/24, there was an officer involved shooting in Toledo with the US Marshal's Task Force while they were attempting to serve a warrant. Toledo 4 PO/ USMS TFO the Parole Officer, was with the task force when this occurred. Thankfully, no officers were injured. The suspect was shot but is expected to recover.
- 2) On 4/18/24 the USMS Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force – Lorain Division was involved in an officer involved shooting in the City of Lorain. This included 3 APA TFOs. The task force was serving a warrant on an individual wanted on a Federal warrant, who attacked the officers as they made entry. The suspect was shot and killed. Three task force officers were treated at the hospital for various cuts, bruises, and abrasions, with one receiving stitches in his arm and head. Parole Officer Dave Gaul was treated and released with an abrasion to his head.

Also, recently in State of North Carolina 2 Parole Officers were killed in line duty.

<https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wxii12.com%2Farticle%2Fnorth-carolina-officers-killed-heres-what-we-know-victims-charlotte%2F60647234&data=05%7C02%7C%7Cd6eb375ed4954615770c08dc6952dde1%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638501051842719025%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=8BGQMo3mHhciwwtIXbMJe2DQwZ096MjZugvYYBxgtj8%3D&reserved=0>

I hope I can get you to support this legislation.

Thanks

Chris Niekamp

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