



**Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
House Substitute Bill 51 – Opponent Testimony
House Government Oversight Committee**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, my name is Heinz von Eckartsberg. I am the retired Chief of Police in Dublin, Ohio and formerly the assistant superintendent of the Ohio BCI. I am here representing the membership of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. We appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to provide opponent testimony once again on House Substitute Bill 51, the second amendment preservation act.

Clearly, this is a complicated bill, with some controversial parts. From our point of view, however, there are several sections in particular in this legislation that are most problematic for our membership. They are as follows:

- It appears that the substitute bill, in its current form, would still prohibit law enforcement in Ohio from utilizing the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) forensic tool, if its use were tied to investigating or enforcing any federal firearms laws that were the original focus of an investigation. While we are not opposed to prohibiting the general “registration and tracking” of firearms, the wording in this bill would prohibit Ohio law enforcement from using this forensic tool to tie the use of certain firearms used in violent crimes to suspects of those crimes, if they are eventually charged federally, and if those crimes were the focus of the investigation.
- This same section of the proposed legislation would appear to also prohibit the use of the eTrace network by law enforcement in Ohio, if a weapons violation were the focus of the investigation. This forensic tool allows Ohio police officers to quickly track down violent crime suspects who have used a firearm in the past to commit a crime. Users of the system can search the eTrace database of crime guns using the weapon’s serial number, type of crime, date of recovery of the weapon and the names of suspects involved. Again, as with the NIBIN Network, eTrace is used to search for suspects who have used guns in gun crimes.
- The sub-bill also only allows state and local law enforcement to participate in inter-jurisdictional task forces “for the purpose of enforcing laws not related to firearms, firearm accessories, or ammunition.” This would seriously hamper the effectiveness of our cooperation with federal law enforcement and other state and local agencies by prohibiting these task forces from ever focusing an investigation on weapons violations.

When dealing with criminals who are committing violent crimes, oftentimes the tools they are using to commit these atrocities are obtained illegally. A large number of these investigations are initiated with the focus on the weapon used in a crime, as that may be the only lead available. This prohibition creates an unnecessary hinderance to law enforcement in our efforts to hold these criminals to account.

The membership of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police is primarily concerned with keeping Ohioans safe and reducing and solving crime. We are strongly opposed to the unnecessary roadblocks this bill creates for law enforcement in our efforts to accomplish this mission.

Thank you for your time, and 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.