



## **OHIO HOUSE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**November 14, 2023**

### **Written Opponent Testimony House Bill 51**

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written opponent testimony regarding the Ohio Municipal League's position on House Bill 51, known as the Second Amendment Preservation Act.

Although the current substitute bill included improvements over the original language to clarify that employees of political subdivisions can participate in an interjurisdictional task force to enforce laws unrelated to firearms, as well as to allow them to pursue violent criminals and provide support for investigations involving firearms, this bill still has concerning effects at the local level.

The bill would create liabilities for municipalities who hire veterans of the U.S. armed forces as police officers. The liabilities even extend to any other municipal employees that have worked for the federal government.

It also includes provisions that:

- Prohibit a law enforcement officer from having the authority to enforce or attempt to enforce any federal gun-related acts or laws
- Subject municipalities that employ a law enforcement officer and who knowingly violates the bill's provisions to a \$50,000 penalty per occurrence.
- Subject municipalities to a \$50,000 penalty for each employee that the municipality knowingly employs who is acting as or previously acted as a federal official, agent, employee, or deputy who knowingly enforced, attempted to enforce, or gave material aid or support to others in an attempt to enforce any infringement

Based on the bill, there are serious concerns about the huge penalties that could potentially occur in communities with already tight budgets, as well as their ability to hire those who worked for the U.S. government, including veterans.

Whether someone leans more toward allowing guns or controlling guns is an important issue, but it is also important to consider how this bill impacts the authority and ability of our member communities to carry out their services and preserve the safety of their communities – an

important consideration for *all* bills at the statehouse. This bill will make it harder for municipalities and their police departments to carry out their work.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 51. We urge for your opposition to this bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Scarrett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kent Scarrett  
Executive Director  
Ohio Municipal League