

January 10, 2024

Chair Bob Peterson and Members of the Committee  
Committee on Government Oversight  
Ohio House of Representatives

RE: HB 313 – Firearms for Fire Investigators - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Peterson and Members of the Committee:

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is a national, century-old, not-for-profit organization supported by approximately 1,200 property and casualty insurance companies, including many who write business in Ohio. Working hand-in-hand with our member companies and Ohio state and local law enforcement, we help to detect, prevent, and deter insurance crimes, including arson.

Arson poses a severe threat to life, property, and the environment. Accordingly, section 737.27 of the Ohio Revised Code authorizes fire and police departments to employ fire investigators with the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, compel the production of books and papers, administer oaths, enter premises, and make arrests.

Untouched for 70 years, section 737.27 fails to specifically address whether fire investigators may carry firearms in the course of their duties. Recognizing the inherent danger of their positions, fire departments across the state have and continue to allow their fire investigators to carry firearms via a patchwork of legal interpretations.

House Bill 313 seeks to clarify the right for municipalities to allow their fire investigators to carry firearms. Importantly, the bill also sets minimum training standards to ensure that fire investigators – many who are already carrying firearms – are qualified and legally protected to carry firearms.

**Accordingly, we respectfully request your support for HB 313.**

We thank you for scheduling a hearing and for considering our views as you deliberate the merits of this bill. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at [hhandler@nicb.org](mailto:hhandler@nicb.org) or 847-544-7083.

Sincerely,



Howard Handler, MPPA  
Senior Director  
Strategy, Policy and Government Affairs