

PROPONENT TESTIMONY TEMPLATE FOR SB53

I. Intro Statement:

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Committee. My name is Cami Finley and I represent the Pataskala Police Department. I am here to testify in support of HB 84.

II. Written Testimony:

Growing up, I always had the heart to serve! Whether it was babysitting, dog sitting, or cleaning people's homes, I enjoyed doing things to help others. And because of this, even at an early age, I knew I wanted a job that made an impact on people. I pondered many different careers, being a teacher, nurse, joining the FBI, military, or law enforcement. During my junior year of high school, I decided that law enforcement would be the best option for me. I started my career early by enrolling in the Central Ohio Technical Colleges Criminal Justice Technology program. I had full intentions of getting my bachelor's degree before becoming a police officer, however, God had other plans.

While in the program an instructor urged me to join the next police academy at the college. I explained "I am too young" I will only be 19 when the academy begins. He assured me there were jobs out there and it would all work out. I joined the academy, and upon graduating, I was able to obtain a commission within the given time frame. The Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (or OPOTA) allows 1 year to obtain a commission before you must retake the state test, and 2 years before you must complete the entire academy again.

The time frame currently makes it extremely difficult to join an academy under 20 years of age. However, OPOTA allows individuals to join at 18 years of age. Academies can be anywhere between four months to a year in length.

There are jobs out there for people under 21 years of age, however they are few and far between. This bill would help alleviate the stress of finding a job for anyone who enters the academy under 20 years of age.

I mentioned earlier that I considered the military, but at the time, this choice did not feel like

the best option for me. I was not in a position to leave my family for months at a time. However, to join the military you only need to be 18 years old. I know military and policing are not the same but there are many similarities between the two, and I feel if we can send an 18-year-old across seas to serve our country we should be able to allow them to serve here in our communities.

Some can say that at 18 years old you're not mature enough to handle the job. I can only partially agree with this statement. I believe that there are people older than the age of 21 who may not be mature enough for the job. Age and maturity are not one in the same! This is why it is so important to have a good background, interviewing, and hiring process.

While not every 18 year old will be able to do this job, at 18, we are considered adults and should have the right to be considered for the job.

I am in support of this bill because it will help create a difference in many communities.

III. Closing Statement:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.