

**Ohio House Pensions Committee
February 6, 2024**

**Opponent Testimony
House Bill 296**

Chair Mathews, Vice Chair King, Ranking Member Pocolantonio, and members of the Ohio House Pensions Committee:

My name is Greg Fraunfelter, and I have the honor of serving as mayor of the great City of Logan, Ohio – the heart of the Hocking Hills and Ohio’s top tourist destination– and I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today.

I come before you today in opposition to House Bill 296. As you know, HB 296 would increase the contribution amounts that employers of full-time municipal police officers must make to the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund in the coming years.

This contribution increase represents a significant amount of money that would be diverted from many of the important services and capital projects that greatly benefit the businesses and residents of Logan.

There is no doubt we see the value of our police, fire, and other first responders day in and day out. These services are critical to protecting the residents and businesses within our corporation limits. But carrying out these services effectively and efficiently also requires wise financial stewardship – finding the proper balance in how taxpayer dollars should be spent to maintain services and meet additional financial needs.

In today’s environment, municipalities are already facing a variety of disruptions and challenges to their revenue streams. These include increased cost associated with inflationary pressures for goods and services, staff retention and attraction (particularly in the public safety fields), and unstable revenue collection resulting from the shift to more Ohioans working remotely.

If House Bill 296 were enacted, it would significantly hinder any progress that has already been made, and municipalities will likely come back to the state to ask for even more money to fill the hole already experienced from past cuts to local government at the state level.

I encourage this committee and the general assembly to gather independent data and to thoroughly evaluate the current state of the pension systems to examine all the options that are available before any action is taken to rely solely on the employer rate increases that could result in fewer police and firefighters protecting our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns on House Bill 296. I am happy to answer any questions.