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House Public Health Policy Committee

Testimony on SB 234

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December 4, 2024

Greetings, Chair Mathews, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Health Public Policy Committee. My name is Kyle Erdeljac, and I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 234 as amended, which would allow trained law enforcement officers to carry EpiPens.

I represent the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police and its over 24,000 full-time and retired law enforcement officers, who are dedicated to protecting Ohio's citizens.

I would like to thank Senator Gavarone for sponsoring this important piece of legislation and for bringing attention to an issue that directly impacts the health and safety of many Ohioans. These Ohioans include my wife, who has a life-threatening allergic reaction to tree nuts. The timely administration of epinephrine has twice saved her life through an EpiPen. These incidents demonstrate the life-saving impact of quick EpiPen usage during anaphylactic shock.

Law enforcement officers across Ohio are already carrying and using various medical tools to save lives. Many of us are already equipped with Narcan/Naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses, tourniquets to limit severe bleeding, and, in some cases, automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for cardiac emergencies.

Senate Bill 234, as amended, ensures that only officers who have received specialized training are permitted to carry and use EpiPens. This limitation addresses concerns about improper use and aligns with Ohio FOP's commitment to training our frontline police officers.

Adding EpiPens to our equipment may have the most significant impact in rural areas of our state, where the time between law enforcement response and the arrival of EMS personnel is often substantial. Every second counts during a severe allergic reaction and an officer trained and equipped with an EpiPen could make the difference between life and death.

SB 234 and its amendment provide Ohio law enforcement with another tool to fulfill its mission of serving and protecting our communities. Ensuring officers can administer epinephrine during emergencies strengthens the bond between law enforcement and the communities we serve while safeguarding lives.

Thank you for considering this important legislation. The Ohio FOP urges your support for SB 234 and its amendment.