



# OHIO STATE CORONERS ASSOCIATION

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May 20, 2024

Honorable Scott Wiggam, Chair  
House State & Local Government Committee  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Wiggam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support for the favorable passage of HB 497, which makes various changes to county law.

There are two provisions that affect Ohio's Elected County Coroner Physicians. The first change in the bill (page 23, line 661, ORC 325.15) would further clarify the definition of "private practice of medicine" to NOT include performing an autopsy at the request of another coroner. Since there is not only a severe shortage of forensic pathologists in Ohio, but the entire country, is it more important than ever that Ohio's forensic pathologists be able to assist each other in performing autopsies. Without this specific clarification, it may be construed that performing autopsies is the "private practice of medicine". This change would clarify current practice. Currently, it is unclear if the coroner performing those autopsies for another county can be compensated, no matter if those coroners have a private practice of medicine or if they have given up their private practice to secure the higher salary. This higher salary option is only available to those county coroners that are in counties with a population of 175,001 or greater. Without this clarification, forensic pathologist coroners, who are performing autopsies for another county, may not be able to receive compensation for their work. This change is needed to fortify Ohio forensic autopsy services provided by Ohio's coroners, to Ohio's families, in a timely manner.

The second provision in the bill (pg. 20, line 763, ORC 2335.061) is requested to align both "deposition fees" and "testimonial fees" at the rate of \$350 per hour. Currently, there is a separate formula utilized to determine the hourly rate for both types of fees which creates uncertainty issues for all parties involved. Having a set rate would simplify and clarify this aspect of the legal process. Current rates for deposition fees are lower than \$350 and current rates for testimonial fees are approximately \$650. This change would result in a net zero affect as the average of the two fee rates are being used to recommend \$350.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to request favorable passage of HB 497. Please let us know if you have questions by contacting me at [dcorey@osca.net](mailto:dcorey@osca.net) or 614.262.6722.

Sincerely,

David P. Corey  
OSCA Executive Director