



Sponsor Testimony- Senate Bill 35
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
February 21st, 2023

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, members of the Senate Finance Committee: thank you for giving Senator O'Brien and me the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 35. In the 134th General Assembly, Senator O'Brien and I were both appointed to the Law Enforcement Training Funding Study Commission, which I then chaired. Senate Bill 35 is the result of that study and working with law enforcement across the state of Ohio over the last year and a half.

To be blunt, our law enforcement officers in the state of Ohio need more training. This bill provides funding for the training mandated by the Ohio Attorney General, and allows for *up to an additional 16 hours* of continued professional training (CPT) for a total of 40 hours per year for every peace officer in the state of Ohio from the Highway Patrol, Sheriff's Deputies, to your local Village and Township Police.

Currently in the state of Ohio, there is no permanent funding source for CPT. CPT is state mandated for each law enforcement officer in the state of Ohio yet, we still expect our law enforcement officers at all levels to be the best, to do their best, and to be up to date on the law. One of the most problematic aspects of training law enforcement officers is the lack of consistency in training and continuity of instructors. Often times, different instructors are teaching courses based on whom they can get to teach when a class is booked. This bill would provide permanent funding through the GRF and would enable the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) to stand up full-time training facilities that offer courses year round.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol states (QUOTE): *"Continuing professional training ensures officers are properly prepared for the challenges and incidents they may face while serving the residents of Ohio. Continuing training is not only beneficial for officers, but also the communities they serve. It provides the necessary knowledge and skills to resolve situations quickly and mitigates risk. Continued*

training keeps officers educated on emerging trends, updates to law, and new techniques to handle stressful situations.

Funding and staffing are the key barriers law enforcement agencies face to appropriately train officers. When sending officers to training, agencies have to cover the payroll and training costs; as well as the cost of the officer to fill the shift and maintain safety services for residents. This creates a continual strain on financial and personnel resources.” (UNQUOTE)

Buckeye Sheriff’s Association states (QUOTE): “Senate Bill 35 will aid the Sheriffs of Ohio by appropriating money to ensure each peace officer within the Sheriff’s Office is trained for a minimum of 24 hours and that the county is made whole as far as wages paid while attending CPT. Past practice has been to fund half of the pay rate of a deputy while in CPT. Counties have had to absorb the balance not funded by the legislature.

The minimum CPT training is in addition to other training prescribed by law that is not funded, i.e., firearms requalification. Establishing a minimum number of hours to be funded and a maximum number that would be reimbursement set a standard of training that is met by peace officers and troopers.

Lastly, if there are any funds remaining at the end of each fiscal year, the Attorney General will transfer those funds into a separate account to be used for grants to purchase equipment for law enforcement agencies that employ 25 or less full-time peace officers. This would assist approximately 26 of the 88 Sheriff’s Offices in Ohio.” (UNQUOTE)

At a time when every officer-involved incident makes national news, we should be offering our law enforcement every tool necessary to make the best decisions possible when put in stressful situations.

Thank you for your time, we are open to any questions you may have.

Frank Hoagland, 30th State Senate District

Sandra O’Brien, 32nd State Senate District