

	<p>FINANCE COMMITTEE</p>
	<p>Witness Form</p>

Today's Date 02/26/2024

Name: Edward Myers

Address: Goshen, Ohio 45122

Goshen, Ohio 45122

Telephone: 513-722-3500

Organization Representing: Goshen Township Fire and EMS

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 139

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: None

Administration
(513) 722-3400

Planning / Zoning
(513) 722-3400

Service / Cemetery
(513) 722-3400



Police
(513) 722-3200

Fire / E.M.S.
(513) 722-3500

www.goshen-oh.gov
6757 Goshen Road
Goshen, Ohio 45122

02/23/2024

To: Ohio Senate Finance Committee

Ref: Senate Bill 139

Good morning, Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Finance Committee, my name is Edward Myers. I am the Fire Chief for Goshen Township Fire and EMS. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 139. Our fire department headquarters, Station 18, was struck by an EF2 tornado on July 6th, 2022. Firefighters inside the fire station had approximately 30 seconds notice before the tornado struck. The crew was able to take shelter in a bathroom and thankfully no one was hurt. Per a structural engineer, if the garage doors had been closed in the main portion of the building, the entire building was likely to have collapsed.

Goshen Township Fire and EMS responded to 3,450 calls last year representing a 58% increase since 2018. We have 16 full-time and 42 part-time employees and operate on a budget of 3.4 million. Our revenue is aligned with our expenses. We have very minimal carryover. In our 2024 budget we are expected to have an unencumbered balance of approximately \$230,000 at the end of the year. These minimal unencumbered funds are needed to get us through the first three months of the new year, prior to receiving our first tax payment. This is important because we have very little room in our budget for additional expenses. Furthermore, with such low reserves, we have relied heavily on grant funding for capital purchases over the last few years.

Goshen Township is rapidly growing with an estimated 1,500 new homes being built over the next five years. Senate Bill 139 is crucial for our organization. It will allow us to continue to provide the level of service we currently provide to the citizens of Goshen Township without making cuts that would affect public safety. Goshen was hit by a natural disaster and our firefighters' only concern was responding to our citizens' needs instead of their own. Station 18 is a critical part of providing emergency services to the residents of Goshen Township in addition to mutual aid to many other municipalities in Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren Counties.

The \$2.5 million that Senate Bill 139 would provide, would help rebuild the Station, cover the necessary items we lost in the storm such as furniture, weight equipment, dishes, and all the other items required for the day-to-day operations of a fire station. It would also cover the cost of vital equipment that reduces our firefighter's exposure to cancer. The presumptive cancer laws here in Ohio require fire stations to have certain provisions in place to reduce exposure to the harmful effects of hydrocarbons and other cancer causing contaminants. This funding would also cover vehicle exhaust systems, washers and dryers that are specifically designed to remove

contaminates from firefighting gear, internet servers, alerting systems and many other additional costs that are not covered in the construction of the building.

In closing, I implore you to support Senate Bill 139. Misleading information led many to believe that we could afford to mortgage the balance of what it would cost to build a new station. While a mortgage is a possibility, a mortgage would come with great consequence to the organization and the citizens of Goshen Township. Adequate staffing, increased response times and additional dependence on mutual aid to cover emergency runs will be affected. The purchase of life saving capital such as self-contained breathing apparatus that are required for us to breathe in environments that are immediately dangerous to our life and health will also be affected.

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Finance Committee, I would like to thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today on behalf of our organization and the citizens of Goshen Township.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Myers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Edward Myers MPA, CFO, NRP

Fire Chief Goshen Township Fire and EMS