

# **Al Landis**

State Senator

31<sup>st</sup> District



**Sponsor Testimony**

**Senate Bill 185**

**Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee**

**January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 185.

The world has changed over the past twenty years. I was contacted by members of a fire department in my district, who had received unusual public records requests for the work schedules of firefighters at the station. While the request itself may have been harmless, it brought to mind the implications that this type of request could have on the personal life of a public service worker and their family. An unknown individual could now know where a first responder might be located on a regular basis or when they are away from their home and family. This bill intends to address that issue. A transparent, responsible and accountable system is a necessary factor in our form of government; however, the protection of our first responders and their families is needed as personal information becomes more widely accessible due to changes in technology. Our first responders are under great amounts of stress and the public release of personal information adds to that stress.

Senate Bill 185 has been drafted as companion legislation of House Bill 265, introduced by Representative Wiggam. This legislation would exclude from public records law the past, current, and future work schedules of designated public service workers. In addition to this, currently under the ORC, a designated public service worker may request that their “address... be redacted from any record made available ... to the public on the internet”. SB 185 would ensure that the request itself for redaction paperwork is not included as a public record.

Also, a public service worker may file an affidavit under ORC 319.28 (B) (1) to remove their name from the general tax list and duplicate of real and public utility property from their name to initials therefore helping them to conceal their identity. Senate Bill 185 would ensure that the affidavit itself is not a public record. Current law allows such redactions to be requested by a 1)

“currently employed” designated public service worker, or by a 2) “spouse”, “former spouse” or “a child” of a designated public service worker. Unfortunately, current law does not allow former designated public service workers to participate in this redaction process and SB 185 would include them in the ORC. This bill does NOT expand the exemption to former designated public service workers. But, under the bill, a former designated public service worker who discovers that their address is contained in a record available on the internet, may submit a redaction form.

Under a civil or criminal case, the records would be allowed to be released and made available. Conferring with Representative Wiggams office, we understand that amendments have been added to the House bill and will look at addressing those in a future hearing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I welcome any questions that you may have.

**List of Designated Public Service Worker Titles:** peace officer, parole officer, probation officer, bailiff, prosecuting attorney, assistant prosecuting attorney, correctional employee, county or multicounty corrections officer, community-based correctional facility employee, youth services employee, firefighter, EMT, medical director or member of a cooperating physician advisory board of an emergency medical service organization, state board of pharmacy employee, investigator of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation, judge, magistrate, or federal law enforcement officer.