



**Written Testimony of Keith Blough  
Chief of Police, Summa Health  
Before The Senate Government Oversight Committee  
Hearing on H.B. 158  
Wednesday, May 8, 2024**

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chairman Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and Members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, my name is Keith Blough and I serve as Chief of Police for Summa Health located in Akron, Ohio. The non-profit health system maintains the largest behavioral health provider for the Summit County region. The system also maintains a Level I trauma center at its Akron City Hospital campus.

Summa currently employs thirty-five commissioned police officers to protect and serve thousands of patients, visitors, and employees who access the health system facilities each day. These officers have the following responsibilities and authorities:

- Respond to calls for service that require a level of service beyond what could be provided by a security officer.
- Investigate, detain, and charge/arrest individuals found to have committed crimes on the campuses within their jurisdiction.
- Use law enforcement tools and resources to determine and deter threats against the facility, staff, patients, and community members.
- Provide a high level of customer service, interaction, commitment, and follow through that is not achievable when dependent on local law enforcement resources alone.

On January 17, 2024, Summa's board of trustees announced their intent to sell the health system to HATCo, a for-profit entity. If the sale is approved by federal and state regulators, Summa will become a for-profit health system.

Currently, Ohio law only allows non-profit and public hospitals to maintain a commissioned police force. Summa requests state law, specifically section 4973.17 (D)(1) of the Ohio Revised Code, be amended to allow our health system to maintain a police force because nothing about our business model, location, or patient population changes under a for-profit structure. The health system still needs police officers to protect and serve its patients, visitors, and employees.

H.B. 158 will advance a change in state law that will ensure Summa, as a large urban health system, retains the same level of police protection other Ohio health systems maintain as they operate behavioral health services and Level I trauma centers to benefit the community.