



SENATOR STEVE WILSON

Senate Transportation Committee  
April 24, 2024  
Senate Bill 178

Chair Kunze, Vice-Chair Reineke, and Ranking-Member Antonio, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 178, also known as “*Slow Down Move Over.*”

From 2008-2023, 274 people lost their lives due to crashes on Ohio roadways involving a distressed vehicles. Additionally, a towing technician loses his or her life every six days on America’s roadways.

Current law requires drivers to cautiously shift over one lane, or slow down if changing lanes is not possible, when approaching *certain vehicles*. These *certain vehicles* include:

- stationary public safety vehicles;
- emergency vehicles;
- road service vehicles;
- waste collection vehicles;
- vehicles used by the Public Utilities Commission to conduct inspections; and
- highway maintenance vehicles.

Current law *does not* apply to distressed vehicles. A distressed vehicle is defined under this legislation as a vehicle that is pulled over on the shoulder that is displaying hazard/blinking lights, flares, or some form of emergency signage.

For instance, under *current law*, if you or I pull over on the shoulder of Interstate 71 to change a tire, passing motorists *are not* required to slow down or move over, even if the vehicle has its hazard lights on.

I am sure we are all familiar with abandoned vehicles – vehicles that, for whatever reason, are left to sit on the shoulder for days on end, sometimes weeks. This bill *does not* apply to abandoned vehicles. Rather, this bill only applies to situations where a driver *must* pull over to the shoulder, and that driver turns on the vehicle’s hazard lights or displays some other emergency signage.

Additionally, this bill does not increase or expand penalties on drivers who do not slow down or move over. The current penalty that drivers are subject to when they do not slow down or move over for the *certain vehicles* I previously mentioned, will apply to *distressed vehicles* as well.

Data from the American Automobile Association (AAA) shows a concerning rise in accidents and fatalities related to distressed vehicles. I believe we should do more to prevent these accidents and fatalities. In many cases, Ohioans are already unsure of which types of vehicles they are required to slow down and move over for, according to research from The Ohio State University. By enhancing the law to include distressed vehicles, we can close that information gap so that Ohioans no longer have to question when they should slow down and move over.

I am happy to report that just last week, the Governor Beshear made Kentucky the 21<sup>st</sup> state to enact “Slow Down Move Over.” Let’s make Ohio the 22<sup>nd</sup> state. Thank you for allowing me to testify. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.