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State Senator Catherine D. Ingram

9th Senate District
135th General Assembly

Sponsor Testimony – Senate Bill 84, Veterans and Public Safety 4-23-2024

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 84 testimony today. This legislation is a re-introduction of H.B. 362 from the 134th General Assembly.

We all carry emotional stress and burdens from our personal lives that can impact our ability to best perform at work, especially so for our first responders.

Emotional Intelligence as defined in Senate Bill 84, is the ability to identify and manage someone's own emotions as well as emotions of others. This includes having self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management skills.

Senate Bill 84 aims to provide emotional intelligence training to current and future Ohio Peace Officers that interact with the public to better equip our officers when handling crisis situations. Emotional intelligence training prepares officers to care for themselves which in turn allows for them to better and safely proceed during their time in the field.

Senate Bill 84 will require the Attorney General to adopt rules governing the training of peace officers on emotional intelligence. Further it would require the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commissions to include training on emotion intelligence in its training program. Emotional Intelligence (EIQ) has become one of the most sought out behavioral skills across many organizations. It allows for an individuals to develop resiliency to stress and adversity. Furthermore, studies confirm that almost 80% of our ability to function optimally in our roles is determined by our levels of emotional intelligence. While many people may believe they have significant EIQ skills, everyone can improve these skills through training and reinforcement.

When this legislation was initially introduced it garnered the support of experts in the field of EIQ and groups such as the Fraternal Order of Police. Additionally EIQ training has been taught in numerous Police Departments across the state such as Elyria Police Department, Marion Police Department, and Delaware County Sheriff's Office Leadership.

In 2021, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted announced that \$250 million would be allocated to protect Ohio citizen's from violence and support first responder resilience and recovery. This distribution of dollars is administered through the Ohio Emergency Management Agency Governor (H.B. 33 DPSCD6 Security Grants). Since the implementation of this program the state has been able to address mental,

physical and emotional health issues, burnout, and understaffing. While it is not currently specified in the current legislation, I believe Senate Bill 84 could be supported through this program as well.

Implementing ongoing and comprehensive EIQ training would benefit not only the officers, but the Ohioans that they have sworn to protect and serve.

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for your time, and will be happy to answer any questions.