

April 8, 2025

House Public Safety Committee

Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and House Public Safety Committee members,

I am Joshua Arms, a former commissioned Peace Officer in Ohio and currently unsworn officer for a large health network in the greater Dayton area. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today in regard to House Bill 96.

I represent an important section of former peace officers in Ohio. We are important because of our vast skills and experience, and the opportunity we represent during an increasingly difficult time for law enforcement agencies across not only this great state, but also across the nation.

The opportunity I refer to is that of changing outdated licensing rules that prevent us from rejoining the ranks of departments across the state that are reeling from reduced pools of qualified candidates, and an ever-increasing hostile political environment towards law enforcement professionals everywhere. By removing the current expirations on law enforcement certifications for peace officers and replacing expirations with enhanced and reasonable refresher courses, you will achieve several distinct advantages that will aid agencies of all levels statewide.

1. You will have officers who are highly experienced, well trained, ready and motivated to go back into the profession they once swore their lives to and left for any number of reasons.
2. You will see an increase in income to the state for fees associated with the refresher courses.
3. The time from application to street ready will be significantly shortened, as there will be no need to retake the state basic peace officer course and experience will allow them to more easily navigate department field training programs.

The current method of allowing certifications to expire is no longer serving the best interest of the residents of the State of Ohio and is not in line with other professions with equal or greater education demands. Doctors and Lawyers are not required to repeat law school or medical school if they step away from their profession for any reason. Those professions,

without a doubt, require substantial more time and education to achieve. They also advance quicker in their knowledge demands than that of law enforcement.

I believe with the already mandated Continued Professional Training (CPT), an enhanced refresher course, and applicable departmental training, any returning officer would be well equipped to quickly adapt to any changes and adjust well back into the workforce.

This measure would set a wonderful precedent nationally and make Ohio a leader in law enforcement recruitment reform. Ohio has always been at or near the tip of the sword in law enforcement training, education and standards. It is once again time for us to take a leadership role and recognize and change rules that are no longer serving the best interest of the profession, the state, or its residents.

This rule is prohibitive for many who have wanted to go back into service but have been unable to due to the need to provide financially and physically for their families. The time and financial commitment required to complete a training we already once successfully completed is nothing short of a barrier to re-entry and prohibitive.

I am requesting that the amendment being put forth by Rep. Phil Plummer (District 39) be approved and included in the budget. It will bring in income to the state from individuals such as myself that would not have been brought in under the current rules. The increased funds then could be used to enhance training for law enforcement, as well as to assist in grants for departments to better serve the various communities of Ohio.

I thank you all for your time and desire to bolster the recruitment and ranks of agencies statewide, and to the overall safety of communities everywhere.

Respectfully,

Joshua Arms