

Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 132, also known as Philip Wigal's Law.

Thank you for allowing me the time to speak to you today about House Bill 132, known as Philip Wigal's Law. My name is Mike Wigal. I am the father of Lt. Philip Michael Wigal. My son was a lieutenant for the Town and Country Fire Dept. in West Salem, Ohio. He was killed in the line of duty on Monday, April 11, 2022 at 4:58 pm. He was only 35 years old and left a wife, 2 young girls and a family and community that loved him and valued him! He had a full life ahead of him.

I am here to talk to you about the importance of this bill. First I would like to tell you about Town and Country Fire Dept. It is a volunteer fire dept. located in West Salem, Ohio. West Salem is a small village with one stoplight, in northwestern Wayne County. It is a small farming community with many Amish living in the area. Town and Country Fire Dept. is asked to cover 10 miles on I71. Again this is a volunteer fire dept with a full time staff of 4. Our son was one of the 4 on staff. Many times they have limited first responders on a call. They do not have the luxury of sending more than one squad and one truck. Which means many times there was not a blocker truck to help provide protection like the big cities have. On this particular day there was not one available.

On April 11, 2022 Town and Country Fire Dept. received a call of a one car accident. At the time of the accident, there was a Town and Country Fire truck, state trooper car, and the victim's car. The EMT squad had just left the scene with the victim, who had a serious injury and 3 firefighter/EMTs. Philip along with a state trooper was left to follow up with reports and clean up. The squad had just left when the driver of a tractor trailer from Florida carrying 80,000 of apples neglected to slow down or move over and crashed into the back of the fire truck, hit the state trooper's car, spinning it around and totaling it. The truck then proceeded into the car in the accident. At that time, the trooper was reaching into the victim's car getting her personal belongings. The truck threw him out of the car injuring him. The truck then hit my son, Philip and carried him a short distance, then overturn on him, crushing him. He was pinned under the loaded tractor trailer of 80,000 lbs of apples. It took a while to even find my son.

Because of this accident and the effects of it, the state trooper quit his career and no longer does law enforcement.

That is a day I and my family will never forget! And to this day I can take you the spot that I received that phone call!!!!

Our family is so thankful for all of the support, love and prayers that we have received from so many people. We have been blessed! However no matter how hard we try though, it will not bring back our son, husband, father, brother, brother in law, uncle and friend, Lt. Philip Michael Wigal!!! He did his job that day like so many other firefighters, EMTs, police officers, road workers, construction workers and civilians stopping to help others. Why are we not protecting them?!

I want to get this law to pass, not for the legacy of my son, but to save other families from getting that same call!!

All my and everyone's time and effort working on this bill will be worth every second, if it is put into law! Because you tell me, what price or time is anyone's life worth???

My thoughts on House Bill 132 is to include any strobe light. I don't want to categorize people. All people are important and want to go home at the end of the day to their family – fire, EMT, Police, wreckers, road construction – anyone that is doing a service. I want the news out on this law and it taught better in driver's education. I want to add to the roads sign that have the Move over law on the roads now to electronic signage to make it known what the penalty is for not following the law, especially in the case of injury or death! Make people take responsibility for their negligence and actions! The driver that was involved in taking my son's life received no penalties for the accident because there are no laws in the books that have a penalty in place. That is why this law is so important to me, to protect the brave people that protect me.

Thank you for your time and the service that you do!

We respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 132. Thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent today. We welcome any questions from the committee at this time.