



## OHIO ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

Ohio House of Representatives - Judiciary Committee

Proponent Testimony on HB 132 - "Philip Wigal's Law"

Jon Harvey, President Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters (OAPFF)

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Chairman Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of the Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters. My name is Jon Harvey, and I proudly serve as President of the OAPFF, representing more than 13,500 career fire fighters and paramedics across our state.

**I stand before you today in strong support of House Bill 132, known as "Philip Wigal's Law."** This legislation is a critical step toward enhancing the safety of Ohio's fire fighters, law enforcement officers, paramedics, and other emergency responders who risk their lives every day along our roadways.

Tragically, the namesake of this bill, Fire Fighter Philip Wigal, of Town & Country Fire District in Wayne County, was struck and killed on March 28, 2022, while responding to a disabled vehicle on I-71. Philip was a dedicated public servant, a father, a husband, and a community protector. He died doing exactly what so many of our members do: serving on the front lines, feet away from high-speed traffic, with little more than flashing lights between them and death.

Just last year, that same tragedy struck again. Lieutenant Paul Mickolick of the Country Fire District lost his life when he was fatally struck by a passing vehicle while assisting a driver stuck in a roadside ditch. His sacrifice echoes Philip Wigal's and reinforces what we know all too well: Ohio's Move Over Law must carry stronger penalties, better enforcement, and broader public awareness.

### **House Bill 132 delivers exactly that:**

- It creates a new vehicular assault offense when serious physical harm is caused due to a violation of the Move Over Law (R.C. 2903.08).
- It increases penalties for vehicular homicide, raising fines to \$10,000 and mandating driver's license suspensions appropriate to the severity of the offense (R.C. 2903.06).
- It modernizes Ohio's driver education curriculum by requiring all new drivers to receive specific instruction on the Move Over Law (R.C. 4508.02).

- It directs the Ohio Department of Transportation to post new warning signage about these criminal penalties (R.C. 5501.28), reminding motorists of their legal and moral obligation to slow down and move over.

These reforms will help save lives.

Every day, our members respond to car crashes, structure fires, and medical emergencies along highways, often in chaotic and dangerous conditions. Despite using every available safety precaution (reflective gear, emergency lighting, vehicle positioning) our members remain dangerously exposed to passing traffic.

House Bill 132 sends a clear message: failure to protect roadside responders will carry serious consequences. It also educates and warns the public before tragedy strikes. It is a balanced, bipartisan measure that reflects the value Ohio places on the lives of those who serve.

Fire Fighter Philip Wigal and Lieutenant Paul Mickolick should still be with us today. Let their stories drive action; not just remembrance. Let this General Assembly send a message to every fire fighter, police officer, paramedic, tow truck driver, and highway worker in Ohio: your life matters, and your safety matters.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I welcome your questions and offer the full support of the OAPFF as this bill moves forward.