**Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police**
**Proponent Testimony – House Bill 372**

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, my name is Robert Butler and I am the President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) and the Chief of Police for the city of Independence, I appreciate the opportunity to provide proponent written support for House Bill 372.
The OACP represents the dedicated men and women who lead law enforcement agencies across our great state. We stand united in advocating for this critical legislation, which honors the ultimate sacrifice of Deputy Larry Henderson and seeks to protect all those who serve.

We sincerely wish that Deputy Larry Henderson was the only name driving this bill. We wish his tragic, targeted murder were an isolated incident. However, we live in a time where others have already occurred. This reality is brutally confirmed by the line-of-duty deaths of Morrow County Deputy Daniel Sherrer, who was fatally shot while attempting to de-escalate a domestic crisis, and Lorain Police Officer Phillip Wagner, who was killed in a deliberate ambush simply by parking his cruiser to eat lunch.

This bill is not simply a legislative proposal; it is a profound declaration of support for every individual who puts on the badge every day. It speaks directly to the reality faced by our peace officers, prosecutors, first responders, and military members who willingly run toward danger to ensure the safety and rule of law for the rest of our citizens.

The truth we must acknowledge today is that law enforcement has come under attack simply for the uniform they wear. This escalating violence is not collateral damage; in too many tragic instances, the targeting of officers is premeditated and intentional. This cannot, and must not, be tolerated.

We cannot live in a society where the deliberate targeting of law enforcement is acceptable. Such actions are an attack on the foundational order and stability of our communities. When the safety of those sworn to protect us is compromised, the safety of all citizens is at risk. We have a fundamental obligation to create a legal environment that deters these heinous acts.

House Bill 372 achieves this by amending the criminal code to mandate the death penalty or life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for adult offenders convicted of the aggravated murder of a protected public servant. The implementation of these increased

penalties sends a clear and unambiguous message. A message that those who knowingly choose to act with fatal violence against law enforcement will receive the strictest sentencing available under Ohio law. It assures the families of fallen heroes that their loved ones' murderers will never be eligible for parole.

The OACP strongly urges this committee to pass House Bill 372 decisively. Thank you for introducing this bill and reading my testimony today. OACP is always available to meet to discuss this matter further if you so choose.