



Rep. Meredith Craig
77th Ohio House District

House Bill 424 – Sponsor Testimony 10/8/24

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Teska, Ranking Member White, and members of the House Public Insurance and Pensions Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 424.

Ohio's public pension systems were designed to attract and retain public employees by offering stable, reliable retirement benefits in place of Social Security. These systems provide defined benefits based on an employee's salary and years of service, creating strong incentives for long-term public employment and retirement security. However, the structure and separation of these systems can sometimes lead to unintended consequences, particularly for law enforcement officers.

The separation between the retirement systems of OP&F and OPERS has resulted in officers facing difficult career decisions. Due to service transfer limitations, someone with 20 years of service in OP&F may decide not to pursue a promotion to deputy sheriff or run for sheriff because of the long-term implications such a move could have on their retirement benefits.

Ultimately, as a state, we want to encourage experienced officers who have committed their careers to public service to pursue opportunities where their skills and leadership can have the greatest impact. However, under the current system, an officer nearing retirement has no incentive to accept a leadership role that would remove them from OP&F. Leadership comes with increased responsibility and workload, and for someone close to retirement, these changes could jeopardize or reduce the value of their pension, giving them a financial reason to turn down such roles.

Individuals who have dedicated their careers to serving our communities deserve to receive the full pension they have earned, while also having the flexibility to take on new roles. The inability to transfer service between pension systems should not be a barrier to professional growth, and House Bill 424 aims to address this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, and we would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

