



State Representatives Joe Miller & Kevin Miller
Districts 53 & 69

Chair Abrams, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Public Safety Committee, thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on HB 44, which would grant police departments the power to fill vacant positions in civil service without an exam if the department can present evidence that the competitive component of exams is deemed unnecessary, and the applicant has exceptional qualifications. This bill aligns the same opportunity for statutory cities as charter cities in hiring law enforcement. Additionally, the bill would grant police chiefs the ability to run training programs for cadets.

As the sponsors of this legislation, we believe the civil service process helps determine qualified candidates and still holds value by curbing nepotism and favoritism, however it has proven to be impractical when regarding lateral transfers.

Currently, under the civil service process when a department seeks to hire an officer, time is needed to not only post the position but also to schedule a test and wait for results. In Ohio, Police Departments located in statutory cities must go through this process, however, a charter city can immediately hire a qualified officer and avoid the civil service process. Filling positions with veteran officers avoids excess time and money and allows for a trained officer to immediately make an impact. It is our goal to help the police force work more effectively for community members and get well-trained officers out into the field.

HB 44 would also allow municipal police chiefs the ability to conduct training schools for prospective law enforcement officers that align with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy standards and cadet qualifications. Upon completion of a training school program, a graduate may be hired directly by the relevant department, provided the graduate also satisfies the requirements for original appointment. This is permissive language, not a “shall” but a “may.”

In the 135th General Assembly, this bill passed both the House Homeland Security Committee and House Floor with unanimous votes and got 3 hearings in the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee.

We again would like to thank Chair Abrams, Ranking Member Thomas, and the members of the House Public Safety Committee for hearing our testimony today. We are more than happy to field any questions the committee may have.

