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Gary Click

State Representative

Committees
Community Revitalization
Ways and Means
Education
Children and Human Resources

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Public Safety Committee, good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on HB 82.

The United States has one of the best highway infrastructures in the world. Our highways are a critical factor in our domestic supply chain. Ohio has the fifth largest interstate highway system with more than eight thousand highway lane miles. According to ODOT, that's enough to travel from Los Angeles to Washington, DC three times. We also have the nation's second largest total number of bridges with over 27,000!

It goes without saying that such a large infrastructure requires a significant amount of maintenance. That maintenance is performed by the good men and women at ODOT, our county engineers, and contractors across the state who I like to call the salt of the earth men and women who work for a living. Without them, we would have no infrastructure, our economy would grind to a halt, the job market would crumble, and Ohio's families would suffer loss.

It is the men and women wearing the hard hats, reflective vests, carrying the shovels, operating the heavy equipment, and holding up the traffic signs that I stand before you to represent today. The one thing they deserve more than anything else after working a long hard day is to go home. They deserve to go home and embrace their husbands and wives, to hug their kids and tuck them in at night. That doesn't always happen.

Work zone fatalities increased by 61% in 2021 reaching a 17 year high nationwide resulting in over 42,000 injuries and 954 fatalities.¹ That is enough to fill the capacity of a stadium.²

"Highway Maintenance workers died on the job 3.7 times more often than the average American worker & 19 times more often than Engineering & Office/Administrative workers."³

The following statistics were retrieved from the [Ohio State Highway Patrol Work Zone Dashboard](#) on March 17, 2025.⁴ They reflect statistics from 2020 through last week.

- 22, 416 crashes (workers present 35% of the time).
- 94 fatal crashes with 104 deaths. (Fatalities +144% in 2024)
- On June 24, 2024 there were 28 work zone crashes with a 7 day average of 18.57.
- On July 17, 2024 there were 164 work zone citations with a 7 day average of 74.9.

¹<https://www.workzonebarriers.com/work-zone-crash-facts.html>

²Record attendance at Progressive Field was 45,274 in 1997.

³<https://www.workzonebarriers.com/work-zone-crash-facts.html>

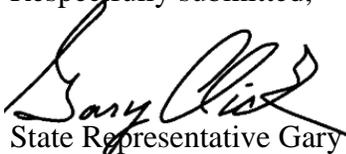
⁴<https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/dashboards-statistics/ostats-dashboards/workzone-dashboard/>

- There have been 30,607 citations OSHP (39% were for 20+ mph over the speed limit).

The [Traffic Safety Bulletin](#) reports on Work Zone crashes from 2019-2023.⁵

- There were 24,642 crashes resulting in 8,911 injuries.
 - 28% of crashes involved a driver between the ages of 15-24.
 - OHSP issued over 35,000 citations (75% for speed violations).
 - OHSP issued over 100 citations for speeds in excess of 100 mph.
- There were 86 fatal crashes killing 95 people.
 - Morgan Trau reported that 34 ODOT crews were hit in the first two months of 2024 compared to 56 during all of last year.⁶ An article from April 2024 adds nine more for a total of 43.⁷ In a report by Brad Hamilton, Amanda McFarland (ODOT's Northeast Ohio Public Information Officer), reveals that 162 ODOT workers have been killed in work zones.⁸

Respectfully submitted,



State Representative Gary Click
Ohio House District 88

⁵https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/statepatrol.ohio.gov/links/WorkZone_Bulletin_2024.pdf

⁶<https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/03/06/ohio-lawmakers-want-to-increase-fines-in-construction-zones-after-34-odotworkers-struck-so-far-this-year/>

⁷<https://www.vindy.com/news/local-news/2024/04/road-work-yields-danger-as-construction-season-begins-in-valley/>
<https://fox8.com/news/want-respect-odot-crews-safety-is-on-the-line>