



State Representative Mark Johnson
Sponsor Testimony – House Bill 82

House Public Safety Committee

March 24th, 2025

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Public Safety Committee.

The numbers for 2025 are even more concerning. A Fox19 article written by Ken Brown and published last Tuesday, reports that work crews have been hit 53 times in just the last 2 ½ months alone, and that ODOT is begging drivers to be alert so that every worker and driver can make it home to their families each night.⁹

While we cannot eliminate risk, we can reduce it. We cannot prevent every accident, but we can lower the numbers through incentives and education. We have the ability to ensure that one more person survives a work zone and that many more Ohio families will finish their day together at home, rather than in an emergency waiting room, waiting on news regarding their loved ones.

House Bill 82 is a step to ensuring that more Ohio families stay whole, healthy, and together. As it stands, the bill proposes to enhance education and awareness by requiring driver's ed courses to include instruction on the dangers and requirements of driving in a construction zone and mandating the completion of a safe driving course as approved by the DPS director after every offense in the work zone. This bill also permits private contractors to install speed monitoring devices and flashing lights to inform and alert motorists as they enter the work zone.

We are also looking at enhancing fines and penalties for reckless driving and failure to complete the safety course. HB 82 imposes a \$400 fine if the offender fails to complete the mandatory driving safety course within 30 days and increases the penalty for reckless op from a minor misdemeanor to a first-degree misdemeanor if it takes place in a construction zone. If the driver has prior reckless ops, they get a 90-day suspension on the second offence and a one-year suspension after the third.

The final change we are seeking to add would enhance reporting requirements. This version of the bill allows the Department of Transportation (ODOT) to install video cameras in construction zone to monitor and record the flow of traffic. It is important to note that it does not create automated speed enforcement but would require ODOT to allow a law enforcement agency to obtain a copy of any image or video captured at the time of an alleged violation if they are investigating a possible traffic violation. This bill also requires ODOT to cooperate with a local jurisdiction, at the request of the jurisdiction to assist in installing the video cameras. With these changes we begin to create safer construction zones and begin to save the lives of countless workers and drivers alike.

Please allow me to end with this quote from ODOT Highway Technician Jason Barthol.

“I have two kids at home and a wife. My daughter’s 16, my son’s 10. They both depend on me to come home safe. Every night, every worker in every zone has a family that they want to go home to. Each one of those workers has a story.”¹⁰

Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 82 for your consideration. Representative Click and I are happy to take your questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.