

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: April 4, 025

Name: Edward R. Kinney

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Medina Police Department

Position/Title: Chief of Police

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB44

Specific Issue: Proponent Written Testimony

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? Written Testimony

Please provide a brief statement on your position: See attached.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Chief Ed Kinney

Medina Police Department, Ohio House of Representatives – 136th General Assembly

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of House Bill 44.

As Chief of Police for the City of Medina, I can tell you firsthand, law enforcement hiring is not what it used to be. The days of lengthy waiting lists and packed testing rooms are long gone. We're in a recruiting crisis, not a recruiting cycle. HB 44 gives police departments the flexibility they need to adapt without compromising professionalism or preparedness.

Civil service rules were born out of an era when hiring was about who you knew, not what you knew. They brought fairness and accountability to public employment—and rightfully so. But those rules were designed for a time when departments had hundreds of qualified applicants lined up at the door. That's no longer the case. Today, we're not fighting nepotism—we're fighting to find anyone interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement. The spirit of fairness must remain, but the structure needs to evolve.

This bill does two things, both smart and long overdue:

1. **Allows police departments to create internal training academies aligned with OPOTA standards.**
2. **Permits direct hiring from those academies—without a competitive civil service exam.**

I want to be clear: this isn't a shortcut to the badge. This is about creating a pipeline—one that allows us to **invest in candidates early**, train them up the right way, and retain the ones who show the dedication and competence to serve.

Right now, we're pouring time and resources into recruiting candidates we *hope* will make it through a civil service testing process we don't control. HB 44 flips that model. It lets us train candidates in-house—according to our community's expectations—and if they prove themselves, we hire them. But make no mistake: that happens **only after** they've passed our exhaustive vetting process. Background checks, polygraphs, psychological and medical evaluations—that level of scrutiny isn't going anywhere. It's essential, and it will remain. It's a plan that builds loyalty, improves retention, and lets chiefs get back to the business of policing instead of perpetual hiring cycles.

There are critics who will say this weakens the civil service system. I respectfully disagree. This bill keeps the standards—what it removes is the red tape. HB 44 still requires cadets to meet OPOTA requirements. It still allows departments to set qualifications and rules for entry. It cuts down the lag time between "interested applicant" and "boots on the ground."

This legislation is especially vital for municipal departments that fall under civil service rules, where candidates are often lost to agencies who are not required to employ a civil service process; such as sheriff's offices, villages, and townships. HB 44 levels that playing field.

In closing, this bill is not about lowering the bar but removing unnecessary barriers. It's about modernizing a system that hasn't caught up with our real-world challenges. HB 44 is pro-accountability, pro-training, and, most importantly, pro-community.

Thank you for your time, and I urge your support for this important legislation.