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Testimony from:

Alan Smith, Midwest Region Director, R Street Institute

In SUPPORT of House Bill 131: “Prohibit law enforcement from using quotas for arrests, citations.”

May 13, 2025

House Public Safety Committee

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

My name is Alan Smith and I am the Midwest Director of the R Street Institute, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy organization dedicated to practical solutions that promote free markets and limited, effective government. We have an acclaimed Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties team that includes a former prosecutor and a retired NYPD officer who is also a Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Additionally, I have also served in law enforcement and care about public safety outcomes.

That is why we support HB 131.

As a policy think tank, we believe respect and faith in policing is one of the most important aspects of law enforcement. Let me start where Representative Miller left off when he introduced the bill at your last meeting. He said, “When the public believes that police officers are subjected to quotas, it undermines the public trust in law enforcement that is so essential for civil society to function.”

Although we’re known for our research, we don’t have hard data on how often someone in Ohio gets a ticket because of internal agency pressure. Many agencies across the country deny the use of quotas, but we all know that any system, if unchecked, can drift into practices that aren’t aligned with its mission.

Our concern with quotas isn’t just about over-policing or public perception—it’s about undermining the professionalism of a job that depends on discretion. [Officers](#) are trained to exercise judgment, to assess situations based on facts, not numbers.^[1] When [agencies](#) tie performance reviews or career progression to raw enforcement tallies, it sends a message that the quantity of stops or citations matters more than the quality of the work.^[2] And that’s when you start seeing [consequences](#)—both in the community and inside departments.^[3]

I've got a friend who's a police chief in central Ohio. I trust him with my life—and that's the kind of confidence every community member should feel when interacting with law enforcement. But when there's even a hint that someone got pulled over not because of what they did, but because of a monthly goal, that trust takes a hit. And when trust starts to [erode](#), we all pay the price.^[4]

Now, some may worry that eliminating quotas means eliminating accountability. It doesn't. While banning quotas removes a blunt and often counterproductive metric, departments still need meaningful ways to assess effectiveness and guide improvement. There are far better [tools](#) for this purpose.^[5] Outcome-oriented [measures](#), such as clearance rates, response times to high-priority calls, and community satisfaction surveys, can capture the real public safety impact of police work.^[6] [Process and compliance](#) metrics, like timely report completion, training hours, and adherence to use-of-force policies, ensure that officers are meeting professional standards without distorting their decision-making. And finally, community-focused indicators, including calls for service related to persistent problems like [traffic safety hotspots](#),^[7] help guide strategic deployment and **problem-solving** rather than encouraging raw enforcement counts.

At R Street, we believe law enforcement professionals should be equipped with as much training as they can absorb and then trusted to do the job using their informed discretion. This bill moves Ohio in that direction. It reinforces that law enforcement decisions should be based on safety, not stats. It supports officers by taking pressure off of arbitrary performance measures and redirects agency focus toward real public safety goals.

HB 131 sends the right signal—to officers, to departments, and to the public. It says Ohio values both accountability and integrity in policing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I urge you to support the bill.

Respectfully,

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¹Shaun Ossei-Owusu, *Police Quotas*, 96 New York University Law Review 529, May, 2021, <https://nyulawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Ossei-Owusu.pdf>

²Griffin Edwards & Stephen Rushin, *The Effect of Police Quota Laws*, 109 Iowa Law Review 2027, July 15, 2024, <https://ilr.law.uiowa.edu/sites/ilr.law.uiowa.edu/files/2024-07/ILR-109-Edwards-Rushin.pdf>

³Jackie Fielding, *Outlawing Police Quotas*, Brennan Center for Justice, July 13, 2022. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/outlawing-police-quotas>

⁴Tom R Tyler, *Enhancing Police Legitimacy*, The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Volume 593, Issue 1, May, 2004. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0002716203262627>

⁵Emma Zürcher & Rick Slootweg, *Police Performance Must Be Measured with Purpose*, RAND, Commentary, June 18, 2024. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2024/06/police-performance-must-be-measured-with-purpose.html>

⁶Malcolm K Sparrow, *Measuring Performance in a Modern Police Organization*, New Perspectives in Policing Bulletin. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2015. NCJ 248476. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/248476.pdf>

⁷Traditional Hot Spot Analysis, University of Florida Transportation Technology Transfer Center, accessed May 11, 2025. <https://techtransfer.ce.ufl.edu/tech-transfer/transportation-safety-center/situational-awareness/traditional-hot-spot-analysis/>