

Committees

Public Safety – Ranking Member



Committees:

State and Local Government  
Veterans and Military Development

## Cecil Thomas

State Representative, Ohio House District 25

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Sponsor Testimony HB241  
House Public Safety Committee  
Reps. C. Thomas, Lawson-Rowe

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, and members of the Public Safety Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 241, legislation that seeks to improve how we respond to dangerous dog attacks. HB 241 would require a 10-day quarantine period for any dog that attacks a person and, under specific circumstances, would mandate a court hearing to determine the dog's disposition.

This issue became deeply personal to me earlier this year after the tragic and brutal attack on Emily Rentschler in Colerain Township. Emily was mauled by two dogs in broad daylight. It wasn't just a traumatic event for her and her family—it shocked and traumatized an entire neighborhood. Neighbors tried desperately to intervene and protect her. 911 calls flooded in. The fear was immediate and widespread.

Yet even after such a violent attack, under current Ohio law, the dogs were allowed to remain at home during the mandatory 10-day quarantine. Colerain Police Chief Edwin Cordie tried multiple times to have the dogs removed, but was told his hands were tied. In his own words:

**“I would like to see some sort of change when we have a situation like this—that the dog is removed for the safety of not only the victim and the community, but also the homeowners.”**

Ten days later, nothing had changed. The owners were under no legal obligation to surrender the dogs. The victims, meanwhile, were left to live in fear.

Residents like Vickie Bowman, who's lived in the West White Oak neighborhood for 34 years, described a growing sense of dread:

**“I’m just scared to death to go outside,”** she said. She and other neighbors had long feared this was coming—and they were right.

That was when I knew we needed to act.

HB 241 closes this dangerous loophole. It ensures that if a dog seriously injures or kills a person, that dog must be quarantined in a secure facility—**outside** of the community in which the attack occurred. This provides immediate relief to the neighborhood and ensures an impartial investigation can take place during the quarantine period.

It also clarifies who is responsible:

- **The dog owner** will bear the cost of housing, any necessary training, or euthanasia, depending on the outcome of the investigation.
- **Animal wardens and public safety officials** will have clearer authority to act, without waiting for additional tragedy to strike.

This is about public safety. It’s about accountability. And it’s about making sure there is a clear path forward in the aftermath of an attack—so no community is left confused or afraid.

In cases like Emily Rentschler’s, those dogs should never have remained in the neighborhood. And no victim should ever have to wonder what comes next or who to call. HB 241 answers those questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I now yield to my Joint Sponsor, Representative Lawson-Rowe.