

OHIO FAMILIES UNITE

FOR POLITICAL ACTION AND CHANGE

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Emily Cole and I am the Executive Director of Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change, or OFUPAC. OFUPAC was started by Ohio families directly impacted by the criminalization of poverty, police brutality, incarceration, and the criminal legal system here in Ohio. We anchor the Ohio Police Reform Policy Table, founded in the beginning of 2023. Our policy table consists of over 75 members, including families impacted by police brutality, legal experts, grassroots organizations, and local and national partners, all working in coalition to build an Ohio where everyone gets home safe each day. I am honored to be here today to stand with and for our families and our policy table as a proponent and urge you to pass House Bill 131.

We as an organization are proud to support any efforts by the General Assembly to reduce unnecessary interactions between peace officers and Ohioans that do not advance public welfare and public safety. House Bill 131 does just that - it ensures no officer in Ohio is forced to prioritize revenue generation over community safety. Productivity in a department should never be tied to police enforcement mechanisms, and it is frankly disappointing there are departments in Ohio that still view quotas as an acceptable policy and management tool in the modern era of public safety.

As you know, quotas are an antiquated policy that require law enforcement officers to meet a minimum number of tickets and/or arrests in a certain time period. These policies are counter to developing stronger community-police relations, a goal I think many in this body share. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, police quotas do the opposite of improving public safety, and in fact *“prevent officers from focusing on larger public safety issues.”*¹ This analysis reported one study found officers with arrest and citation quotas have a lower clearance rate for violent crimes. Quotas are not only unpopular, but they also are ineffective in building community safety.

Quotas for policing also create opportunities for racially-biased policing. In New York, NYPD officers “alleged a commander pressured them to enforce low-level violations

¹ Brennan Center for Justice, Jackie Fielding, “Outlawing Police Quotas”, published July 13, 2022. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/outlawing-police-quotas>

against Black and Hispanic people, while discouraging them from doing the same to white or Asian people.”²

Twenty-six other states including Iowa, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, and Virginia have implemented state law prohibiting the use of quotas by departments. It is past time for Ohio to get this done.

OFUPAC testified in support of the previous version of this bill during the 135th General Assembly, and we remain committed to ensuring this policy becomes law in the Ohio Revised Code. We urge members of this committee to prioritize public safety and move swiftly to bring this bill out of committee and to the full House body for passage. We are happy to serve as a resource in any way we can to help advance this policy forward.

In closing, I ask you to consider my testimony and urge you to vote yes on House Bill 131. If it pleases the Chair and members of this Committee, I’m also happy to return as a Proponent for Senate Bill 114, the companion which you’ll hear sponsor testimony from today as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Emily Cole
Executive Director
OFUPAC

² The New York Times, June 9 2022, <https://perma.cc/LHC6-3PPS>