



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.

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House Public Safety Committee

May 3, 2025

Testimony on House Bill 20

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and committee members – I am Michael Weinman, Director of Government Affairs for the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding House Bill 20. I'm here as the voice of the 23,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police – active-duty officers and retirees.

House Bill 20 establishes a 14-foot buffer zone around first responders while they are carrying out their sworn duties. Why is this important? Increasingly, the members of the FOP are experiencing harassment and menacing from agitators and self-proclaimed First Amendment auditors. Harassment and menacing also come from family members, friends, and community members, while officers are attempting to place individuals into custody or performing other lawful actions. HB 20 will act as a deterrent and become a tool for de-escalation. Before any enforcement of HB 20 occurs, a warning must first be given to those harassing the officers and coming within 14 feet of them.

This bill does not stop anyone from filming the officers. It does, however, stop the harassers from shoving a camera in an officer's face, an all too common tactic. Nothing in the bill disallows them from zooming their cameras in from 14 feet—something all modern devices can do.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 20. The FOP respectfully requests that the committee report the bill favorably.