Written testimony in Support of the Find Act HB 217, requested of and submitted my Mike Rankin, Attorney at Law.

<u>BACKGROUND</u>: Mr. Rankin was appointed by and served on Governor DeWine's Missing Persons Working Group, hereinafter "MPWG.

He is a 46- year practicing attorney; the former Franklin Co., Ohio- First Asst. County Prosecutor of Special projects (2020-2025); past Registrar-Director of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (2007-09 and 2011-2014) and the former Asst. Ohio Secretary of State- #2 from (2009-2011).

Mr. Rankin is the past Chairman (2001-02) and board member of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (1995-2007). He is co-founder of the Mid-Ohio Amber Alert non-profit in 2001 that later helped launch & establish some of the key protocols for the statewide Ohio Amber Alert system. Mike later served on the State Amber Alert Advisory Board under then Gov. Kasich and has served on numerous non-profit community service boards in the past 5 decades.

<u>TESTIMONY:</u>

Dear Hon. Ohio House of Representatives Chairwoman Cynthia Abrams, Rep. Christine Cockley, HB 217 primary Bill sponsor, and to the many other bipartisan HB 217 or "FIND ACT" sponsors- my sincere thanks and gratitude for the opportunity provide my summary of support.

From the time I commenced my career in corrections, law and later law enforcement starting in Oct. 1975, I have had occasion to observe vast improvements since then in how the Ohio law enforcement officials and first responders perform their duties. The growing complexities of the work and demands placed upon law enforcement, make it necessary to always be in a continuous improvement mode.

The proposed language of the FIND ACT with its amendments is a good start in helping law enforcement officials & agencies ("LEO"s) improve the odds of finding missing adults and children. The ACT ensures more statewide consistency in the handling of missing persons investigations and timely follow-up.

Requiring missing persons be entered by LEOs into the national NamUs missing persons database is essential (also encouraging US DOJ to better link the NamUS database with the National Crime Information Center or NCIC database – this for easier one-time entry of information into the NamUs database by investigators).

The two amendments to be based on the MPWG recommendations listed below ensure missing persons investigations are not delayed or old case files destroyed. Time and technology are always of the essence in solving missing persons investigations no matter how much time passes.

- Recommendation #4:
  - The Ohio General Assembly should create legislation authorizing law enforcement and county prosecutors to seek search warrants to gather information and records that may help them locate a high-risk missing person.
- Recommendation #8:
  - The Ohio General Assembly should create legislation requiring local law enforcement agencies to digitize unresolved missing persons reports prior to the destruction of paper files. BCI should also create a digital repository to store missing persons' case records from local law enforcement agencies.

Many of the MPWG recommendations are no cost or low cost in nature. Implementation into law of the recommendations listed in the FIND Act along with amendments is a good first start.

See MPWG final report of May 25, 2025. [Missing persons report final_compressed (1) (2).pdf](#)

It is well known that time is of the essence in the proper handing of missing persons investigations. The Ohio 2024 missing persons statistics (see the final report link above) call for the changes recommended by the MPWG. The FIND Act if passed into law, paves the way for improved outcomes when adults or children are reported missing.

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