HOUSE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

HB 533 PROPONENT TESTIMONY

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Public Safety committee, I am Sharon Montgomery, a 24-year activist for traffic safety and "victim"* support after barely surviving a serious three-car crash myself and then barely "surviving" the many cracks traffic casualties* fall through in the legal system.

One of those cracks is the restrictive language in the vehicular homicide, vehicular manslaughter, and vehicular assault laws. Another crack is prosecutor discretion which allows a prosecutor to not charge one of those offenses even when the circumstances fit the restrictive language. In our crash, one person died and two people were very seriously injured. There were no vehicular homicide, manslaughter, or assault charges.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear Rep. Miller say this bill was requested by prosecutors.

I strongly support making it possible to hold vehicle operators who cause serious physical harm to road users fully accountable for their actions when they choose to operate those vehicle unsafely. Changing the language in 2903.06 and .08 as this bill proposes will definitely be a step toward that goal.

As I read the sponsor testimony, I expected an explanation of why the bill lists more specific vehicles in this day and age when new kinds of vehicles are being invented frequently. I wondered why the bill doesn't just say "vehicle." When I watched the hearing on the Ohio Channel, I expected a committee member to ask that question, but there were no questions.

Vice Chair Miller, I have followed a number of your safety bills and I have respected and agreed with them. I appreciate your frequent attempts to improve traffic safety. I wonder, though, if this approach of naming only certain additional vehicles is going to end up being just a temporary fix, working only until some new vehicles are on our roads.

If there is a reason why simply stating "vehicle" won't work, perhaps that needs to be explained.

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**I have to use the word "casualty" now because Marsy's Law (HB 343) changed the definition of victim so that most people injured by traffic violence are no longer included in that definition. This means they are not covered by the victims' rights law or the 50+ new protections of Marsy's Law. And, they are not eligible for the many supportive services from the AG's Victim Services Section and any services it helps fund. This change was not an oversight.*