



Representative Erika White
Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 311
Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee
Wednesday, February 11th, 2026

Thank you, Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, and Ranking Member Weinstein and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee for the opportunity to present to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 311, bi-partisan legislation that will designate the third full week of May as “EMS week” in Ohio.

Today, I rise to honor the extraordinary men and women who serve Ohio’s emergency medical system. These heroes and sheros—paramedics, EMTs, dispatchers, nurses, emergency room staff, transporters, and first responders—do far more than transport patients. They stabilize lives in high-pressure situations, providing critical care from the moment a call comes in until the patient is safely admitted to a hospital. Their work doesn’t stop at the ambulance or the ER door—it continues until patients are fully under care.

This legislation is a small token of appreciation for the first responders who put our safety and wellbeing as a priority each and every day. EMS dispatchers work tirelessly to support first responders and manage emergency calls from citizens, ensuring that timely and effective medical care is dispatched. First responders are often the initial professionals to arrive on any scene and exposed to various traumas.

No matter if they serve urban neighborhoods, rural townships, or suburban communities, EMS and emergency care professionals face complex emergencies that demand skill, courage, and compassion. The diversity of these workers—the range of expertise, experiences, and backgrounds—makes Ohio’s emergency system strong and effective. It is also the reason why we need more people to recognize the importance and value of these jobs: every role is essential, and every person contributes to saving lives.

Designating a full week to honor all emergency medical and emergency care professionals gives us the opportunity to say, without hesitation, “Thank you. We see you. We appreciate you.” There is no cost to showing gratitude, yet the impact is profound. A week of recognition reminds every Ohioan that these heroes and sheros—from dispatchers to transporters, nurses to paramedics—are the lifeline of our communities. Their dedication saves lives, comforts families, and strengthens the health

and safety of our state. Their work deserves our attention, our respect, and our celebration.

And as we recognize them, we also inspire the next generation—drawing more Ohioans to answer this call of service and continue the legacy of compassion, courage, and care that defines these professions. I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 311 as a significant piece of legislation that will recognize those who serve Ohioans on a daily basis.