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Ohio Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety Committee
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House Bill 311
Proponent Testimony

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Ohio Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Ambulance and Medical Transportation Association, I want to extend our sincere appreciation for your consideration of House Bill 311 to bring recognition to the Emergency Medical Service providers across the state of Ohio.

Quality ambulance and medical transportation is essential to the continuum of care and achieving quality healthcare outcomes for the most vulnerable populations in the state. Our Association is a diverse organization of ambulance and medical transportation providers including companies, not for profits, and publics. Our members provide EMS to cities, villages and townships, certified Emergency Medical Dispatching for several of those communities and emergent and non-emergent, but still critical transports to hospitals & nursing facilities, including mobile intensive care units, nonemergency ambulances, and wheelchair vans.

We are so grateful to the sponsors of this bill for bringing it forward to raise awareness for the industry and the essential services provided by our highly trained personnel, who regularly put their lives on the line to help their fellow Ohioans.

The ambulance and mobile healthcare industry in Ohio has been under duress for the last 15 years. The extremely low medicaid reimbursement in conjunction with the expanding population of Medicaid patients has created an untenable financial situation for many providers. These rates have profoundly impacted the ability of the industry to maintain competitive salaries for highly trained individuals caring for vulnerable populations under stressful conditions, in turn leading to staffing shortages and longer wait times for medical transportation. We ask so much of our State's Emergency Medical Services workers in an all too often thankless environment.

All too often patients with critical time sensitive diagnosis are waiting hours or even days to be transported by well trained and equipped professional providers; patients are waiting to get into the ER because a bed is taken up by someone needing to be moved, patients are waiting in a costly floor bed to get discharged to home or rehab, or to a mental health facility to recover, or patients are losing their bed because they could not be transported in time are all symptoms of this problem. We hope raising awareness for the critical and often lifesaving services provided by the dedicated individuals in this calling will help to encourage policymakers to explore solutions to the obstacles and burdens faced by our industry. We encourage the passage of HB311 and thank you for your consideration.