



Representative Bernie Bunyan Willis

74th House District

House Bill 434- Senate Finance Committee

October 7th, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 434, a narrowly tailored and critically needed fix to correct unintended consequences in prior legislation.

This bill passed the Ohio House without a single vote in opposition, reflecting broad bipartisan recognition that these corrections are necessary and urgent.

1. Driver education requirement error under H.B. 54

Under the law as recently enacted, certain applicants for a limited-term license have been forced, unexpectedly, to satisfy driver education requirements—requirements that were never intended to apply to them. This issue impacts individuals with *military, federal, or diplomatic ties* who already hold valid foreign driver’s licenses and visas and meet the standards for safe driving. H.B. 434 restores clarity to Revised Code § 4507.21, ensuring that these individuals are not burdened by duplicative or inappropriate requirements.

2. Expanding the Drones for First Responders Program (fix to H.B. 96)

Under the current statute, only municipal corporations may participate in the Drones for First Responders Program—excluding counties, townships, and thus many rural fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies. This exclusion was clearly not intended, and it has left many first responders without access to lifesaving technology.

The amendments in H.B. 434 allow counties, townships, and all political subdivisions to participate—ensuring all first responders, whether in large cities or small towns, can obtain the training, equipment, and federal clearances needed to deploy unmanned aerial systems safely and effectively.

I wish to emphasize strongly: this bill must take effect immediately. The emergency clause is not a luxury it is essential.

- Each day this issue persists, individuals with valid foreign licenses needlessly endure bureaucracy at the BMV.

- Every delayed moment denies first responders in non-municipal jurisdictions access to critical tools that enhance public safety.
- Passage with the emergency clause ensures these corrections begin working immediately upon signature, not months down the road.

I respectfully urge the Senate Finance Committee's favorable report *with* the emergency clause.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I now yield to my joint sponsor, Representative Lampton.