

May 13, 2025

**Testimony on House Bill 96**  
**Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee**

Good afternoon, Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein and the other members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony today on behalf of myself, and thousands of Ohioans.

My name is Joshua Arms, and I am a former commissioned Peace Officer, and currently a non-commissioned officer with a large health network in the Dayton area.

I am writing today to urge the members of this committee and the Senate as a whole to keep the current provisions in place for the update of lapses in service requirements and expirations for current and former Peace Officers in Ohio. The provision is a far past due update that will immediately and positively impact staffing shortages statewide, by removing expirations on Peace Officer certifications and replacing it with an enhanced refresher course.

According to a recent survey from Police1.com, cops were polled as to what they wanted to see change and what some of their biggest concerns were that affected their ability to do their jobs effectively on a daily basis. According to the survey, aptly titled 'What Cops Want', approximately 1,260 law enforcement officers were surveyed. Out of those officers surveyed, here is some of those findings from the officers according to Police1.com:

- Nearly 50% of Officers said their safety is always or frequently compromised due to understaffing.
- 75% reported delayed back-up during emergencies.
- 63% cited longer response times to incidents and calls for service.
- 56% said they're exposed to more high-risk calls due to understaffing.
- 43% reported being unable to take necessary breaks.
- 69% of officers said safety risks have increased due to a younger and less experienced workforce.
- 90% said lack of real-world experience in high-risk scenarios is contributing to safety risks.
- 52% identified insufficient training for new recruits as a major concern.

How does this translate into the lapse in service provisions currently contained in HB96 as passed by the Ohio House of Representatives? Under current rules, if an officer leaves their job for a period of 4 years or more, they are required to fully complete the Ohio Peace Officers' Basic Training course. This standard completely ignores obtained real-world experience obtained through years

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of service and performing all the tasks required for the basic academy, any advanced training, and hands on experience of thousands, if not tens of thousands, of calls for service handled. We do not require lawyers, doctors, engineers, dentists to fully repeat their respective schools of training before being able to go back to work. That is an unreasonable expectation and burden to place on an individual who has already established themselves in the workforce and has fully completed the training prior.

This would immediately make available thousands of prior trained, certified and experienced individuals who could immediately compete to fill vacant positions across the state. This measure would reduce costs and time of repeating the full academy and instead offer up a much shorter and cheaper option of an enhanced 80-hour refresher course designed to knock off any rust and ensure officers are brought up to date with legal changes. This would also put bodies on the street faster increasing overall officer safety, reduce response times to calls for service and emergencies, help allow for proper rest and reduce overtime demand, and increase the overall knowledge and experience in departments across the state.

Furthermore, the invaluable experience that can be immediately brought into departments will help close the gap between younger officers and those ready to retire, but bringing in people who can provide many years of service, but also help to continue to guide and mentor young officers as they navigate this rewarding and challenging career.

This measure will create income to the state by attracting individuals such as myself, who due to having a family and a mutual need to provide financially, who would likely not be able or willing to repeat the fully basic training course again due to its time and financial demands. We would immediately upon passage be able to seek to fill an open vacancy at any one of the hundreds of agencies seeking officers and then take the refresher at a much more reasonable time and financial price. This is simply a win-win for the state of Ohio, every law enforcement agency in the state, and the taxpayers of the Great State of Ohio. The state generates a new source of revenue, departments have an immediate new pool of experienced officers to hire from, and the taxpayers will benefit from increased police presence and response times.

Ohio has always been at the forefront of law enforcement training and innovation. This will once again put Ohio at the top of the spear in changing how we support our communities and departments by providing the most experienced and deepest employment pool of candidates in the country.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to testify in support of HB96 and the provisions mentioned above.

Respectfully,

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