

69<sup>th</sup> House District

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Committees

Public Safety, Vice Chair  
Transportation  
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General Government

Kevin D. Miller  
State Representative

**TO: Senate Judiciary Committee**

**FROM: State Representatives Kevin Miller, Lawson-Rowe**

**DATE: October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025**

**RE: HB247 Sponsor Testimony**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Judiciary committee.

Thank you for allowing us to give sponsor testimony on HB247, important legislation to update Ohio's dangerous dog laws. House Bill 247 better known as Avery's Law, is named after Avery Russell, a brave and courageous young lady from Reynoldsburg who was attacked by a dog. You will hear more about Avery's story from my joint sponsor here shortly.

The idea for House Bill 247 was born out of a conversation I had late last year with the Licking County Dog Warden, Larry Williams. Larry explained to me the many issues that exist with Ohio Dog laws specifically the unorganized and confusing nature of the code section....but more importantly the lack of accountability and appropriate penalties for dog owners who repeatedly fail to contain and control their dangerous and vicious dogs. We have all been made aware of the deaths and serious injuries, including disfigurement, caused by unprovoked dogs attacks in Ohio...many in our own districts.

He also explained dog wardens lack the ability to immediately seize dogs that inflict serious injuries or death unless the animal has previously been designated as a vicious or dangerous dog. A circumstance commonly referred to as the one free bite rule. So in many cases, traumatized victims are forced to see the very dog that attacked them in the yard next door or across the street.

I am happy to say that House Bill 247 addresses nearly all the issues we discussed. The bill is a total re-write of the Revised Code 955 section making it more user friendly for both our prosecutors and our dog wardens.

We give dog wardens the ability to immediately seize these animals regardless of a prior designation...however the bill ensures due process by mandating a probable cause hearing within 10 days of the seizure.

The bill also ensures there will be no future victims from these dangerous and vicious dogs because if the judge determines the dog inflicted serious physical injury or death...the dog must be put down.

House bill 247 also strengthens the requirements for those who choose to own dangerous and vicious dogs including:

- mandating 100 thousand dollars of liability insurance,
- strengthens outside fencing requirements
- adds new indoor confinement requirements when guests are present.
- increases the licensing fees

Dog owners who chose to possess these designated dangerous animals will face increased penalties when they fail to contain and confine these animals that put our children like Avery and our community's safety in jeopardy.

Let me be clear...this bill is targeted to address irresponsible repeat offenders. It does not increase penalties for dog owners whose dog was provoked or has no history of aggressive behavior.

It's also important to note that this legislation is for unprovoked dog attacks only, so dogs who are protecting themselves or their owners from a provocation will not be punished.

House Bill 247 went through several revisions with input from interested parties and I'm happy to report there are no known opponents to the bill. It passed unanimously out of the House Public Safety committee and on the House Floor.

Dog ownership is a privilege that comes with real responsibility. While most owners take this seriously, the law must provide a strong framework for those who neglect this responsibility. HB247 ensures public safety, strengthens local enforcement, and brings needed clarity to outdated sections of law—all while respecting the rights of responsible dog owners.

I will now turn it over to my Joint Sponsor....