



**Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police
Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 188**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing us to provide proponent testimony today on Senate Bill 188, the Ohio Barricade Suspect Bill. I write you in two capacities: as the President of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP), representing over 700 executive law enforcement leaders across this state and as the Chief of Police for the City of Independence. The OACP strongly supports SB 188 because it is fundamentally a bill about reducing violence, protecting officers, and preserving community resources.

When a suspect retreats into a barricaded position, be it a residence, business, or structure, they intentionally convert a standard arrest into a dangerous standoff. Under current law, the fugitive has little to no disincentive to prolonging that incident. We often find ourselves in situations where the only factor compelling a suspect to surrender is the eventual application of force, such as chemical agents, specialized equipment, or physical breach by a SWAT team. The longer an incident drags on, the greater the likelihood of a tragic outcome, resulting in severe injury to the suspect, innocent civilians, or the dedicated law enforcement officers working to contain the scene.

SB 188 is essential because it offers a powerful, non-violent incentive for surrender. By creating an immediate, additional third-degree felony charge for barricading to evade arrest, we fundamentally change the suspect's cost-benefit calculation. This increase in penalty gives law enforcement a critical negotiation tool to achieve a voluntary resolution, thereby decreasing the risk of having to use force to bring the suspect into custody. Forcing a surrender by violent means is always a last resort because it puts our peace officers directly into harm's way, and SB 188 provides us with the legal leverage to safely de-escalate these volatile situations before they demand a violent conclusion.

Furthermore, the impact of a single barricaded suspect incident is catastrophic to a community's ability to function and maintain baseline public safety. These standoffs rarely resolve quickly; they often require the commitment of specialized resources, including SWAT, Hostage Negotiators, bomb disposal units, and mutual aid from surrounding departments, for hours at a time. This results in hundreds of thousands of dollars in unbudgeted overtime and wear-and-tear on specialized equipment. Crucially, while a barricade is ongoing, critical patrol and support resources are pulled from the surrounding area. When every available officer from Independence and neighboring communities is concentrated on one house, it leaves vast sections of the county exposed and vulnerable to other emergencies and criminal activity.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 188 is not merely a punitive measure; it is a proactive piece of public safety legislation. It reduces risk exposure, preserves strained municipal resources, and provides law enforcement with a statutory tool that encourages a peaceful resolution to an otherwise highly dangerous scenario. On behalf of the Independence Police Department and the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, I urge this Committee to support and pass Senate Bill 188. Thank you for your time and attention to this vital matter. I am available for any questions.