Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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House Bill 20
Written Proponent Testimony
March 25, 2026

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 20 to increase the penalty for obstructing official business when the victim is a law enforcement officer or other emergency service responder engaged in their official duties.

As this committee knows, our Association generally disfavors legislation that increases penalties for victims based on the victim's profession. We do make exceptions for victims who are part of particularly vulnerable groups like children, the disabled and the elderly. We also make exceptions for our peace officers whose job is to put themselves in harms way in order to protect the public. It is our view that any offense against a peace officer is an offense against the justice system itself and is a threat to the public's safety.

Because of this we are proud to support House Bill 20 that we believe will help promote the on the job safety of our law enforcement and emergency service responders by giving them greater control over the area in which they are trying to work. Our emergency service responders' ability to safely and efficiently carry out their duties is essential to their own safety, the safety of victims, and the safety of other individuals who are present during a law enforcement response or other emergency response.

Ultimately, we need our law enforcement officers and emergency service responders to be able to fulfill their duties without outside interference in their work. Their safety and the safety of others depend on it. We commend Rep. Hall and Rep. Plummer for their work on this issue and greatly appreciated working with them during the committee process in the House on changes that we think make this a better bill and one that prosecutors will be better able to enforce. We encourage the committee's favorable consideration of the bill.