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Senate Judiciary Committee

March 25, 2026

Testimony on House Bill 20

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and committee members – I am Michael Weinman, Director of Government Affairs for the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding House Bill 20. I'm here as the voice of the 23,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police – active-duty officers and retirees.

House Bill 20 increases the penalty for obstructing official business from a second-degree misdemeanor to a first-degree misdemeanor. If the victim of the offense is an emergency service responder engaged in lawful duties, and the responder issued a warning before any act that hampered or impeded their performance, why is this important? Increasingly, members of the FOP are experiencing threats and menacing behavior from agitators and self-proclaimed First Amendment auditors. Harassment and menacing can come from family members, friends, and community members while officers are attempting to place individuals into custody or perform other lawful actions. HB 20 will act as a deterrent, serve as a tool for de-escalation, and be used only against persons who attempt to prevent, obstruct, or delay the responder's performance of any authorized act within the responder's official capacity. Again, before any enforcement of HB 20 occurs, a warning must be given to those harassing the officers.

This bill does not stop anyone from filming the officers. It does, however, stop the harassers from shoving a camera in an officer's face, an all too common tactic. Nothing in the bill prevents them from zooming in on their cameras — something all modern devices can do.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 20. The FOP respectfully requests that the committee report the bill favorably.

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