



State Representative Brian D. Hill
H.B. 110 Sponsor Testimony
Date: March 24, 2015

Chairman Butler, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Stinziano, ladies and gentlemen of the Judiciary committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding House Bill 110. This legislation increases the penalties for failure to stop after an accident when the offense results in the death or serious physical harm to a person.

Specifically, House Bill 110 increases the penalty for fleeing the scene, where death or serious injury occurs, from a felony of the third degree to a felony of the second degree. This would effectively place the penalty at the same level as aggravated vehicular homicide. Fleeing the scene would now hurt one's chances of seeing a lesser charge. I believe that this will provide Ohio's judges with a more appropriate initial penalty level with which to render sentences.

House Bill 110 is a re-introduction of House Bill 397 from last General Assembly. To refresh your memories, the idea for this bill was generated from a hit-and-run fatality that occurred in my district nearly two years ago. A constituent of mine brought forth the tragic story of her fifteen year old son who was fatally struck by a motorist and whose friend was thrown some ninety feet as a result of the collision. The driver fled the scene and was picked up the following day thanks to an anonymous tip to the police. The driver admitted to consuming alcohol and smoking marijuana prior to driving that night. However, since he was not apprehended at the time of the accident, those intoxication levels could not be obtained and a lesser sentence was given by the judge.

That being said, incidents of hit-and-run fatalities seem to be getting more widespread. We have all seen news coverage of heart-breaking stories where bicyclists, pedestrians, and other motorists have been killed as a result of hit-and-run accidents. Oftentimes it takes several painstaking months or years before the offenders are caught and brought to justice. I believe that victims and their families are entitled to stronger penalties due to enduring such pain and anguish.

I received input from the Ohio Judicial Conference and the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association on the language of the bill. All parties involved believe that we came up with a bill that does not overly dictate how judges and attorneys are to handle these types of cases. I also think it is important to mention that Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Ohio Bicycle Federation are in support of the legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.