

Chair Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Ohio House Bill 38, increases penalties against an offender who feloniously assaults or murders

A first responder or member of the military with targeted intent.

This bill expands the offense of aggravated murder to include purposely causing the death of a first responder or military member

When the offender had specific intent to commit the crime against one of us--

The bill also increases the penalty for a targeted felonious assault against a first responder or military member from a second degree felony to a first degree felony and requires a mandatory prison term if the victim suffered serious physical harm.

I recognize that current law covers those who feloniously assault or murder, however this legislation specifically addresses those who target and seek to purposely harm or kill first responders.

The original concept behind this was to put forward a Hate Crimes Bill for those who target law enforcement officers simply for being law enforcement officers.

Hate crime laws are used to protect many groups in our society and attacks against law enforcement officers and first responders would certainly fall under the definition of a hate crime:

A prejudice-motivated crime which occurs when a perpetrator targets a victim because of his or her membership in a certain social group or race.

As U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Ohio for the past 15 years,

I have seen first-hand the dangers faced by law enforcement officers and first responders on a daily basis.

As if there weren't already enough dangers, there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of attacks targeting first responders in the past several years.

No first responder should have to worry or wonder whether the call to which they are responding is legitimate or is an attempt to lure them to a location. ■

We owe it to those who are willing to risk their lives on a daily basis to pass legislation such as House Bill 38 that will increase the penalties for these targeted

attacks, but more importantly could act as a strong deterrent to those who may consider such a heinous act.

Thank you for allowing me to provide Testimony and I am now available for any questions the committee might have.