



## Written Testimony of Chief of Police Charles C. Chandler

Before the Senate Ways and Means Committee Senate Bill 190 Income tax credit for law enforcement officer expenses  
02/04/2020

Thank you Chair Roegner and all members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to present my testimony today on Senate Bill 190. My name is Charles Chandler and I am the Chief of Police for the City of Westerville in Franklin County, Ohio. When I first heard about this bill allowing officers to get an income tax credit for purchases of equipment above and beyond what they receive from their agency I felt it was an important issue that could help many officers working throughout the state.

I have been a police officer for over 25 years, having worked for 3 different police agencies in very different financial environments. I started my career in Morrow County Ohio working for the Village of Mount Gilead. My initial pay was \$6.50 an hour working 32 hours a week. I then moved to the City of Marion Ohio in Marion County and made my final stop in Westerville where I am currently the Chief of Police.

Many agencies across the state do not have the tax base for funding that we do in the Franklin County Metropolitan area. Fortunately at my agency and in the majority of the Metro area officers for the most part receive a good amount of equipment and yearly uniform allowances to upkeep that equipment.

However having worked outside of the Metro area I can testify that many of our brothers and sisters in rural areas and economically distressed areas of the state do not have that luxury. There are many small agencies across Ohio that cannot afford ballistic vests, recording equipment or even firearms and uniforms. Officers in these agencies may not get an initial issue and may have to provide their initial equipment at their own expense. I can affirm that my first ballistic vest at the Village of Mount Gilead was well past its expiration date and I provided my own firearm, holster, Mag Light and magazine holders that had to meet agency specifications.

As a 21 year old rookie police officer at a small rural agency I know this bill would have benefitted me when starting my career. It also would have been a benefit throughout my career replacing large ticket items such as my ballistic vest. Even in Westerville the replacement of a ballistic vest after initial issue is the responsibility of the officer. In conclusion, peace officers across Ohio are committed to the safety of their communities and committed to their craft. If passed this bill will assist officers in keeping up the maintenance of their equipment and perhaps assist them in purchasing new equipment their communities cannot afford that will assist them in performing their duties.

Once again thank you Chair Roegner and members of the committee for allowing me the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 190. I will be happy to take any questions at this time.