



House Criminal Justice Committee

HB 27 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of House Bill 27. House Bill 27 increases the criminal penalties associated with failing to secure a load on a vehicle.

I am sure all of you have had an experience where we had to swerve out of the way of a fallen object, possibly even driving to Columbus to the Statehouse. That can certainly be a dangerous scenario especially if there are other vehicles around you. Currently in Ohio, failure to secure a load (R.C. 4513.31) is a minor misdemeanor (R.C. 4513.99). The fine for violating the prohibition is anywhere up to \$150. There is no increasing fine or penalty currently on the offense. There are some exemptions to the unsecured loads law in Ohio for agriculture vehicles, snow plows, and garbage trucks.

House Bill 27 would increase the fine to \$500 if no physical harm is caused by the violation. Should there be harm to a person or property because of the violation, it would be a third degree misdemeanor, punishable by a \$2,500 fine and any other penalty that may be imposed for a third degree misdemeanor. States around Ohio, such as Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, have fines that go up to or exceed \$500 based on if there was an injury involved. A measly \$150 maximum fine in Ohio does not seem to fit the scale for this violation given the destruction a fallen item might cause to another vehicle or human.

According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, there was a total of 2,791 violations from 2015 to 2019. During this stretch of time, there were 6,259 property damage only crashes while 715 people were injured and six killed.

In a moment, Cleveland News Channel 5 investigative reporter Ron Regan will share his personal story on this legislation. I am sure his story will be an eye opener to you all. I appreciate your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.