



HOUSE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Proponent Written Testimony House Bill 116

Lee Powell, CEO
Desco Federal Credit Union
leepowell@descofcu.org | 740-354-7791

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to support House Bill 116, the Ohio Computer Crimes Act.

I am the Chief Executive Officer of Desco Federal Credit Union, which is headquartered in Portsmouth, Ohio. Desco was chartered in 1963 to originally serve the employees of the Detroit Steel Corporation, and upon its closure, the credit union now serves 24,000 members with more than 100 employees through a community charter with a multi-state reach. Membership eligibility includes those who live, work, worship or attend school in Lawrence and Scioto Counties, Ohio; Cabell or Wayne Counties, West Virginia; Boyd or Greenup Counties, Kentucky.

As a member-owned financial cooperative, Desco takes great pride in ensuring members' private and personal information is protected. Unfortunately, several years ago, a former Desco employee attempted to hack into the credit union's core processor to access and steal member information. The individual's attempt was unsuccessful, and no significant harm to the members was caused. The credit union, however, experienced an attempted cyber-crime and sought recourse from the perpetrator. When the credit union raised the incident with the local FBI agent, the response was that this specific scenario did not merit federal attention. The credit union then pivoted to local law enforcement for additional support, and the county prosecutor explained the incurred monetary damages to the credit union would need to be proven to obtain conviction under Ohio law.

By working with the Ohio Credit Union League, Scioto County Prosecutor Shane Tieman, Representative Baldrige, and others, legislation was introduced to close the justice gap that currently exists with attempted cyber-related crimes. House Bill 116 will help deter criminal activity through stiffer penalties for an individual who knowingly, and without authorization, commits electronic computer service interference. The legislation also properly accommodates the need for system vulnerability testing, which is a responsible IT policy best practice, and permits civil action against a perpetrator who violates any provision of the Ohio Computer Crimes Act.

House Bill 116 would better protect businesses, like credit unions, and consumers by modernizing and enhancing the law to punish those who knowingly, and with intent, cause harm and damage through digital means. On behalf of Desco Federal Credit Union and its members, thank you for opportunity to highlight a need to better protect personal data in Ohio.

Please reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns. I remain an available resource to support the Committee's work on this important legislation.