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Jessica E. Miranda

State Representative

Boards, Commissions, & Special Committees:

Ohio Gun Violence Prevention Caucus, Co-Chair

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Chair Baldrige, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the Ohio House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 361.

We all know the annoying and inconvenient feeling when you're driving and you encounter a train blocking a main road in your community. For some, this is more than just an inconvenience.

After hearing from constituents, business owners and other interested parties, it is clear that these blockages can have harmful economic consequences. Furthermore, we need to consider the issue this poses our first responders and those who may be in a rush to get to a hospital.

One example I'd like to highlight in the #Great28 involves the City of Reading. Reading's Historic Bridal District is home to a bustling local business community. A rail line runs through one of the main roads into the district, and as a result residents and business owners in the area have pointed out how stopped trains have significantly slowed traffic, and in turn economic activity.

Rep. Hall and I have both heard these types of concerns in our respective districts, and that's why we're here testifying in support of HB 361. This bipartisan bill would do the following:

- Requires a railroad company to submit to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) an incident report each time the company blocks a crossing for more than five minutes to the hindrance of those trying to cross;
- Imposes a first degree misdemeanor and the following fines for a railroad company that does not submit an incident report in accordance with the bill: For a first violation within a 30-day period, \$5,000; For any subsequent violation within a 30-day period, \$10,000
- Requires the PUCO to submit an annual report to the General Assembly that contains aggregated incident report information each year by July 1.
- Increases the fines (current law is \$1,000) for a railroad company that blocks a crossing for more than five minutes to the hindrance of those trying to cross.

Again, this proposal is being driven by feedback Rep. Hall and I have each heard in our communities. At best train stoppages are an inconvenience, and at worst they harm economic development, and sometimes prevent law enforcement and first responders

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from getting to where they need to be in an emergency. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on HB 361 and I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.