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**Senate Health Committee  
Chief Steve Agenbroad  
Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association  
House Bill 138 Proponent Testimony**

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 138. My name is Steve Agenbroad, and I am the Fire Chief of Clearcreek Fire District in Springboro, Ohio. I also serve as the Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association.

As first responders, we commonly find ourselves in traumatic situations. We understand and accept such responsibilities when performing our duties. For too long, there has been a troubling gap in Ohio law that needlessly contributes to the trauma experienced by our first responders; and to the family of loved ones caring for those that have arrived at the end of their life's journey. House Bill 138 will close that gap.

Today, in the state of Ohio, Emergency Medical Technicians are not able to honor the last wishes of some suffering from chronic illness. Ohio law currently permits Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners to write Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) orders within strict protocols. Due to what seems to be an oversight in Ohio law, those legally issued DNR orders that have been signed by a Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioners are not able to be acknowledged by first responders in the field. This means first responders are put in the unfair position of being required to provide lifesaving medical care, despite the expressed and informed wishes and consent of the patient, and/or their medical power of attorney. There are countless examples of our providers being stuck within these ethical, moral, and legal conundrums across Ohio. These situations are heart wrenching for our responders as well as the patients and their loved ones.

In these situations, first responders and life squad are often needlessly tied up on a scene where those resources are not necessary as crews wrestle with administrative issues involving departmental protocols, medical control physicians, and the patient's healthcare providers. In the wake of such issues, EMT's are often required to provide medical treatment to patients against their will, perhaps to include transport to the hospital while using emergency lights and sirens. Such circumstances only extend the commitment of life saving resources where they are not desired, needlessly adding significant medical cost, and placing members of the public at risk due to an unnecessary emergency response to the emergency department.

As fire chiefs, we strive to make good decisions to decrease these risks to our patients, their family, and the community overall, not to mention reducing or eliminating needless stressors placed upon our crews. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that EMTs in the state of Ohio be granted the ability to honor legally issued DNR's so that we may respect the patient's end of life wishes, and keep our communities safe. That is precisely what House Bill 138 will do, by allowing EMS personnel to honor a DNR order issued by a Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.

Oscar Wilde said, "Duty is what one expects from others". When our first responders are unable to honor legal DNR's, we are unable to fulfill our duty. For that reason, I would like to thank the bill's sponsor, Representative Brian Baldrige, for taking the initiative to help us complete our duty honorably and respectfully while in the field. I also want to thank the Ohio House for passing this legislation on a vote of 93-0 earlier this year.

I do want to take a moment to mention an additional key provision in House Bill 138. The bill enables the State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services to utilize the rule making process that allows individuals seeking a certification to practice as a first responder, to pursue their education and achieve legal certification without first being affiliated with a EMS organization or Fire department. We are facing difficult staffing challenges, and the OFCA supports the removal of barriers that slow individuals wishing to serve their communities as volunteers, or who choose to pursue a career in the fire service by having to first be sponsored by a local community. We as a profession have advanced well past such barriers to entry thanks to the tools afforded to us which include personal and criminal background investigations, health and wellness assessments, and rigorous training protocols and certification procedures.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.