

By Richard A. Butsko Jr.
Grove City Chief of Police

This is a respectful but emphatic request that our state's leaders reconsider the decision they made earlier this year to do away with front license plates on Ohio vehicles.

As a police officer, the reasoning behind this appeal is simple: Removing the front license plate will make police work harder and will make it easier for criminals to succeed.

The front license plate was the key factor in The Grove City Division of Police investigation of the murder of OSU student Reagan Tokes. Her body was discovered in a park in our city in 2017. The front license plate was key to our ability to find, capture, and help convict her murderer and solve this heinous crime.

Our officers found her cellphone dumped along a road near the park but didn't know what happened to Reagan's car. Finding that car was key to identifying and capturing of Reagan's killer.

To find it, officers went through records of license plate readers and one of those readers captured the front license plate of Reagan's car. It was found in an area of the city of Columbus that had no connection to Tokes. It is important to emphasize that the license plate reader only captured the front license plate.

That car had cigarette butts inside. Reagan never smoked or allowed others to smoke in her car. The prompt discovery of Reagan's car lead to DNA evidence that eventually led to the arrest and conviction of Brian Golsby. It is very probable that we would not have found her car if it didn't have a front license plate.

This case makes it clear that having a front plate on Ohio vehicles is important for law enforcement. I am a vocal supporter of the [#KeepTheFrontPlateOhio](#) effort. Plenty of my colleagues who work in law enforcement - including the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association and members of the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police - agree. By removing the front plate, you significantly reduce law enforcement's ability to identify a vehicle that has been involved in a crime.

According to the National Sheriffs' Association, motor vehicles are involved in 70% of serious crimes in the U.S., including murder, assault, robbery, drug smuggling. Additionally, without a front license plate, it is very easy for criminals to intentionally park their vehicle to make it very challenging to impossible for law enforcement officers to be able to see the license plate.

Investigating violent crime is not the only reason Ohio should keep the front license plate, there are other advantages as well. For example, school bus drivers are able to record the license plate of motorists who illegally pass a school bus with activated red lights flashing. This is a serious offense because it endangers schoolchildren. Removing the front license plate makes it more difficult for school bus drivers to identify and report these offenders.

Front license plates are crucial identification tools for both law enforcement and the public responding to Amber and Silver alerts. The list goes on and on.



TARGET LICENSE PLATE: NONE ENTERED

Make: Model: -All- Year:

Date range searched: From 2/8/2017 11:00:00 AM To 2/9/2017 11:00:00 AM

Loc: # 1: 729-733 Oakwood Ave, Columbus, OH 43205, USA

From: 02/09/2017 10:22:34

Total Plates: 50

None Entered

To: 02/09/2017 10:34:29

Target Scanned: NO

Scan: 1/9



02/09/2017 10:22:34



FYR9113

02/09/2017 10:22:34



GQM1849

02/09/2017 10:22:55



GTM3432

02/09/2017 10:23:06



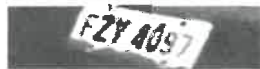
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02/09/2017 10:23:06



GFS7416

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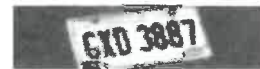
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FGR8547

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GXD3887