



**Representatives Plummer and West
Sponsor Testimony, House Bill 23
Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee**

Chair Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 23.

HB 23 would require police officers and emergency medical service personnel to undergo training on identifying and interacting with individuals with dementia. Training for both professions would be comprised of at least two hours of instruction during basic training programs and at least one hour for continuing professional training.

Under the bill, the Attorney General would consult with the Department of Aging to develop rules governing this training, and the training would be required to cover the following seven areas: identifying individuals with dementia, techniques for respectful communication with such individuals, techniques for addressing behavioral symptoms, identifying and reporting abuse or neglect, protocols for contacting caregivers when an individual is found wandering or in an emergency, local

resources available for these individuals, and local or national organizations that can help police or EMS in these situations.

The House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee did accept one amendment to HB 23 to require that training include instruction on reporting abuse and neglect of individuals with dementia to the appropriate County JFS Department, instead of the AG's office.

It is no secret that Ohio and the nation are in the midst of a significant demographic shift. A May 2019 cleveland.com analysis of Census Bureau data projects this year's census will show that Ohioans 60 and older outnumber those 20 and younger. According to the Alzheimer's Association of Ohio, about 220,000 Ohioans live with Alzheimer's or other dementias – a number that's expected to grow 20% by 2030 as our population ages. What's more, 50% of individuals with dementia live at home without family or a caregiver, and 60% are prone to wandering.

In light of these trends, the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters even more difficult for Ohioans with dementia, particularly for those living without family or a caregiver. There has never been a more important time for police and first responders to receive this training than during this crisis. The stakes are too high for our loved ones who suffer from this disease, especially those who live without family or a caregiver.

South Carolina, Indiana, Oklahoma and Florida have enacted similar legislation in the past decade. We are hopeful that with

your support, we can get the bill to the Governor's desk this year and put Ohio on that list.

Thank you again for this opportunity. After Rep Plummer's remarks, we will be happy to answer any questions.