



**State Representative Mark Johnson**  
*Sponsor Testimony – House Bill 37*  
*House Criminal Justice Committee*  
*March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

Chairman Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for allowing us to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 37 which would raise the penalty for Aggravated Vehicular Homicides committed by drunk drivers.

I decided to start working on this legislation over a year ago when it was brought to my attention by a constituent the shortcomings of Ohio’s penalties when it comes to OVI related offenses. Ohio is currently ranked 49<sup>th</sup> strictest in the nation for penalizing and preventing OVI offenders. The goal of this bill is to give Ohio’s judicial system more teeth in the fight against repeat drunk drivers who kill someone while driving intoxicated.

The main point of this bill is the one strike policy it enacts after someone has plead guilty to one OVI offense in the past ten years. If anyone does have at least one OVI offense on their record and they go on to kill someone while driving drunk, the court will have to ability to sentence them to prison for up to 20 years. Also, if the offender has prior vehicular homicide, vehicular assault or involuntary manslaughter as a result of an OVI offense, the court will have the ability to apply the same sentence. The current language also raises the fines for all aggravated vehicular homicides as a result of an OVI to \$25,000.

Since starting work on this bill, I have had the opportunity to hear from numerous families who have lost loved ones to intoxicated drivers. Bryan Wright, who is here today, is the constituent who brought this issue to my desk as a result of losing his daughter to a drunk driver over two years ago. He pointed out to me how weak Ohio’s laws are compared to other states in the nation, and that is what inspired me to work on this legislation in an attempt to try and deter any drunk driver from becoming a repeat offender.

I will now turn the microphone over to Representative Miller. Thank you for the opportunity to giver sponsor testimony on House Bill 37.