



## FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO, INC.

222 East Town Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4611  
(614) 224-5700 Fax (614) 224-5775  
www.fopohio.org



### Senate Criminal Justice Committee

October 17, 2017

### Testimony on House Bill 327

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Chairman Manning and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kyle Erdeljac, I'm a police officer and a legislative agent for the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police. I am speaking on behalf of the more than 25,000 active and retired members of law enforcement represented by the Ohio FOP. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you in favor of HB 327.

My coworkers and I are fighting hard against the increase of sex trafficking. Frequently, minors are groomed and exploited for evil purposes. Enforcement of existing criminal penalties for importuning have fallen short of sending the message to these exploiters of children that importuning is a serious crime.

HB 327 creates a mandatory sentence for the first offense of importuning minors less than 13 years of age when a telecommunications device—such as a cell phone or a computer—is used to solicit a minor for sex. Under the change, subsequent offenses would increase in penalty with the penalties dependent on the victim's age. These criminals are arranging to have sex with children and should be treated harshly.

Importuning is a problem in our communities. I'm going to discuss two very recent cases where the offender was charged with importuning and other crimes:

1. 68-Year-old Wayne Harper of Carrollton, Ohio was arrested earlier this month after attempting to arrange a meeting with a 15-year-old girl. He attempted to get her send pictures of her shoes and feet. He had her photo saved as a screensaver on his phone. He told her that when he planned on meeting her that he would have her for dessert.
2. 25-Year-Old Reginald Van Wells II of Niles, Ohio was arrested few days ago after a 12-year-old girl saw him standing outside her window as she was getting dressed for school. When she attempted to put on a shirt, he asked to see her breasts.

These kinds of offenses merit prison time. HB 327 sends the message throughout the criminal justice system that our children must be protected from these predators.

The Ohio Fraternal Order of Police supports HB 327.