



Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

Senate Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee
SB 160, 132nd General Assembly
November 14, 2017

Interested Party Testimony

Chair Uecker, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the Committee:


Thank you for the opportunity to provide Interested Party testimony on Senate Bill 160. Revised Code section 105.91 creating the Ohio Judicial Conference directs the Conference to encourage uniformity in the application of the law, rules, and practice throughout the state, and to promote an exchange of experience and suggestion respecting the operation of the judicial system and to consider the business and problems pertaining to the administration of justice and to make recommendations for its improvement. The Traffic Law and Procedure Committee of the Ohio Judicial Conference has reviewed Senate Bill 160, which would authorize courts to order community service in lieu of paying driver's license reinstatement fees, and I would like to share the Committee's feedback.

While judges understand the intent behind the bill, and recognize that many Ohioans have difficulty in meeting the obligations of even the Bureau of Motor Vehicles' reduced payment plan, there are practical concerns over requiring courts to oversee community service programs for the repayment of amounts owed to another state agency. HB 160 could add to the administrative burden placed on courts by requiring court staff to supervise the completion of community service and to coordinate with the BMV on compliance. Reinstatement fees belong to the BMV, and accordingly the BMV, not the courts, should be responsible not only for collecting them, but also for determining whether, and how, community service can be performed in lieu of those fees.

We would suggest amending the bill to specify that the BMV is to be responsible for administering and overseeing any programs that permit community service to be performed in lieu of paying reinstatement fees. However, some courts may decide that they would like to oversee such a community-service program. Accordingly, we would suggest amending the bill to give the BMV the primary responsibility to administer and oversee the program, but allowing local courts that wish to establish their own programs to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this Interested Party testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,


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OHIO JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

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