

Bo Keck

Ways and Means Committee Hearing
Ohio Senate 4-11-18

444 Sunkel Ave. Zanesville, Ohio 43701

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Committee members!

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the importance of House Bill 133—legislation that will undoubtedly help Ohioans who fall victim to natural disaster.

My name is Bo Keck and I'm recently retired as the Director of the Emergency Management Agency and 9-1-1 Coordinator for Muskingum County—a position I've held since 1986. I also serve as a volunteer fireman in my community—a position I've held for 48 years now.

That's a long time. And in that time, I've served my community in just about every first responder role you can imagine. After starting my career as an EMT, Paramedic, I spent over 26 years as a deputy with the Muskingum County Sheriff's office, achieving the rank of Chief Deputy.

I mention all of this to give weight to my testimony here today. I've been a first responder for nearly 50 years, and in that time, I've dealt with emergency situations from all perspectives. And drawing from that experience, I can say unequivocally that HB 133 will have a tremendously positive impact on natural disaster victims here in Ohio.

Spills, flooding, tornado damage—these things happen in Ohio. And when they do, they can cripple a community. I've seen it firsthand. When that happens, we have a responsibility to help people get back on their feet as quickly and as efficiently as we can. It's critical for them, and it's simply the right and decent thing to do.

And that's why I'm so excited about HB 133. Making it easier to engage the help of out-of-state relief workers will have a tremendous impact on our ability to handle disaster response situations. There are times when a disaster really does require an "all-hands-on-deck" approach, and in those instances, making sure the paperwork of out-of-state workers is first in order should be our last concern.

People and businesses *need* running water, electricity, communications and other utilities. This bill will help restore those utilities faster in the event of a disaster. And that should be the most important thing here.

A few years ago, EMA formed an initiative called public private partnership. This was formed with pharmacies, grocery stores and big box stores. The purpose is to support each other during a disaster in Ohio. The main thing we in EMA learned is the sooner we get the private stores open the less the public depends on us and the State of OHIO! They will go out and purchase what is needed if the stores are open.

Please remember that as you consider HB 133.

Thank you.