

3rd House District
Wood County

Columbus Office
Vern Riffe Center

77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111

614.466.8104
Rep03@ohiohouse.gov



HARAZ N. GHANBARI

State Representative | Ohio House District 3

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Finance Subcommittee on Primary
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Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy Generation

November 18, 2020

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Boyd, and colleagues of the House Health Committee — thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony for House Bill 563. House Bill 563 was drafted with the intent of protecting emergency medical first responders, the citizens whom they serve, as well as the entirety of Ohio's healthcare and public health infrastructure.

The heart of the bill is simple. If a hospital or local board of health learns a patient has a positive test, or is a presumptive positive case, for COVID-19 or any other disease classified as a Class A disease pursuant to current ORC 3709.05, that entity would be required to notify any emergency medical services workers who treated, transported, or handled that patient in the thirty days prior to becoming aware of the presumptive case. The bill also provides that it is the responsibility of a hospital or local board of health that is aware of such a presumptive case to determine which EMS workers were in contact with the patient in question within the prior thirty days. LSC has done a great job of listing in the analysis of the bill which first responders are included in the emergency medical service category as well as defining what a presumptive case is.

This bill takes on a new meaning today as we are seeing reports of drastic increases in the spread of coronavirus throughout the state. When this bill was introduced in the spring, the chief concern related to the pandemic response was the lack of personal protective equipment and the preparedness of our hospitals to treat a dramatic influx of patients. Over the last few weeks, a new concern has developed as more COVID cases are being reported by the Department of Health. One of the most pressing challenges of the pandemic today is related to the wellbeing of Ohio's doctors and healthcare workers who are treating those citizens hospitalized with COVID-19. Our emergency medical first responders are an essential piece of Ohio's healthcare infrastructure. If they stop working, Ohio's healthcare system stops working. If passed, this bill will go a long way to protect the health of our EMS workers and sustain the capacity of our healthcare institutions to respond to the occurrence of infectious diseases.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Haraz N. Ghanbari".

Haraz N. Ghanbari
Member of the Ohio House of Representatives