

Thank you, Chairman Green, Vice Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. I am Chief Deputy Carl L. Richert II from the Ashland County Sheriff's Office. I have been a deputy for 40 years, and throughout that time I have worked extensively with the Amish community. I have done what I can to make driving safer for the English and the Amish. In 2003, I worked with the Department of Highway Safety where we held Amish and English community meetings in local churches and Amish barns in an attempt to stop the terrible Amish accidents in Ashland County. For all my effort the Department of Homeland Security awarded me with a \$10,000.00 speed trailer which I still use to this day.

I have been a law enforcement officer for 40 years, a volunteer fireman for 48 years, and a certified EMT for the past 35 years. I respond to all calls for service at the Sheriff's office, even when I am off duty. I respond to fire and EMS calls and accidents in our township. Many are Amish related. I have responded to at least five fatal accidents on county and US highways in northern Ashland County just in the past few years. I had to do CPR on three of the last five Amish victims. I have investigated many accidents involving Amish and English drivers. Just yesterday I responded to a crash on St. Rt. 58 south of Nankin, Ohio where an English driver drove into the rear of a southbound buggy. Thankfully there were no injuries. I know the Amish man and he had just been in a similar accident on St. Rt. 58 north of Nankin in July of this year. Both times the driver said they didn't see the buggy. In both cases there were no poor weather conditions—it was sunny and clear outside.

Three years ago I responded to a call and found an English male driving 35 MPH in a 60 MPH zone. He didn't see the buggy, hit it, and ejected the Amish driver, my neighbor Jacob Swartzentruber. I gave him CPR for ten minutes until the squad arrived. He didn't make it. Again, the English driver didn't see the buggy. He was charged and sentenced to prison for causing the death of the Amish driver.

GROUP WEAVER

I work the Amish Area in northern Ashland County. There are three churches with three bishops. One group, the Weavers, have two lanterns on the rear, six feet one inch of reflective tape, and a 10x12 white rectangle on the rear, thinking this may just be the thing that would catch your eye.

GROUP SAMS

This group is guided by a bishop also, but they are permitted to use any type of light they want. I have seen four red lights flashing on the rear of several of this group, along with the six feet of reflective tape, and two lanterns.

GROUP SWARTZENTRUBERS

This group is old-time Amish so the bishop refuses to let them make changes to the lighting for their safety. They have one lantern and six feet one inch of reflective tape. Nothing else.

I have worked with the Amish in the western area of the county and they have come up with a single yellow LED light attached to the top rear of each buggy which can also be adapted to wagons and carts. Since this started two years ago, there has been a great English response to the lighting and the Amish have sold 500 lights that are used on the buggies day and night. The cost is about \$17.00 for one light and one bracket to attach to the buggy. We have done a news release with live Facebook coverage, along with the local newspaper. We have received many 'likes' on Facebook.

Most Amish want to be safe, but they feel they are not because they have to follow the bishop's decisions and guidelines. All over the county there are Amish on the road at night that use white LED flashing lights, and when they see or hear a vehicle they flash the lights to let them know there is something ahead.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. Thank you for your time.