



Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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Executive Director
House Bill 236
Proponent Testimony
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Chairman Eklund, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 236.

House Bill 236 corrects what is a relatively simple issue in the Ohio Revised Code by ensuring that police officers employed by a hospital that maintains its own proprietary police department, and who are appointed and commissioned by the Secretary of State, are treated equally to other peace officers for the purposes of our assault statutes. These officers are already considered peace officers under Revised Code sections 109.71 to 109.801 that establish the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission and govern the training and certification of peace officers in Ohio. They undergo the same training as any other police and are granted the same powers as police employed by municipalities.

Despite undergoing the same training and having the same authority as other police, these hospital police officers are not considered peace officers for the purposes of our assault statutes, statutes that provide for penalty enhancements for assaulting peace officers. While our Association generally disfavors these types of penalty enhancements based on special classes of victims, we have historically and continue to support such an enhancement when the victims are the particularly vulnerable – children, the elderly, and peace officers who place themselves in harm's way in the name of public safety. Our view has been that an assault on a peace officer is an assault on the justice system itself. Such an assault should be deterred and punished more harshly through penalty enhancements. House Bill 236 does the right thing and the simple thing to ensure that this policy applies to these hospital police.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 236. We encourage the committee's favorable consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.