



Senator Andrew O. Brenner – 19th District
Senate Judiciary Committee
December 9, 2020
Senate Bill 370 – Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 370.

I drafted Senate Bill 370 in response to the widespread property damage incurred by many downtown businesses, including our very own Statehouse, during the weeks and months of protests after the killing of George Floyd. As you may recall, protestors filled the streets of Columbus, and on two separate occasions, May 29 and June 18, vandals damaged the Statehouse. Estimates from the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board detail \$158,000¹ in damage including the breaking of glass, doorframes, light fixtures, as well as the cost to clean and repair the building and grounds. Additionally, the violence that stemmed from these protests put innocent bystanders in harm's way and threatened the lives of those trying to protect their businesses and those of the Ohio Highway Patrol, stationed at the Statehouse.

This legislation increases the penalties by one degree in each of the following sections: 2909.02, 2909.03, 2909.04, 2909.05, 2909.06, and 2909.07. Currently the penalties range anywhere from a fourth degree felony, which carries a sentence of a prison term anywhere from 6 to 18 months, for disruption of public services, to a first or second degree misdemeanor, which carries a sentence of a prison term anywhere from 90 to 180 days, for criminal damaging or endangering. We identified these sections of code because they correspond with crimes committed not just in Ohio, but other states as well, and demonstrate the level of violence that occurred during or after many of these protests. Property damage, personal injury, arson, and the interruption of emergency services are just a few of the issues that Ohio and many other states faced during this period of unrest. By increasing the penalties in these sections, the goal of this legislation is to deter those who would commit such crimes.

Senate Bill 370 also includes an appropriation of up to \$250,000 in FY21 for the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board in ALI 874320, Maintenance and Equipment. The funds will pay for, install, and replace a minimum of 60 high definition cameras and include new imaging software that will enhance Statehouse security operations. After several conversations with Laura Battocletti, Director of CSRAB, the need for security upgrades is great and long overdue. Currently, CSRAB is working with cameras and software that are anywhere from 6-10 years old. To ensure the safety of staff, members, and guests at the Statehouse, upgraded cameras and software from the last two years would be acceptable. As an example, I have attached to my

¹ <https://www.cleveland.com/open/2020/07/damage-to-ohio-statehouse-tops-158000-following-following-vandalism-incidents.html>

testimony two different images. Both images are of the Holocaust Memorial, however, one is using the current fixed view, single view angle cameras that are 1 megapixel and the other is using a 360 degree capability camera with enhanced zoom abilities and 4-12 megapixels. The difference in quality from a 1 megapixel camera and a 4-12 megapixel camera will be the difference between identifying a perpetrator and letting a rioter get away with damaging the peoples house.

Based upon what happened, I would appreciate your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 370. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.