



MONTVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Terry P. Grice, Chief of Police

December 9, 2020

The Honorable John Eklund, Chair
Judiciary Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, Ohio 44315

Re: HB 539 Township Police

Dear Chairman Eklund,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide written testimony on this very important bill. Montville Township is located in Medina County, and has access to 5 miles of Interstate 71 within our jurisdiction with a population of approximately 12,000. Currently, state law prohibits our officers from enforcing vehicle-related offenses under R.C. 4513.39, on Interstate 71. HB 539 was introduced to allow townships with a population greater than 5,000 to have authority to enforce necessary laws to ensure safety for the motoring public.

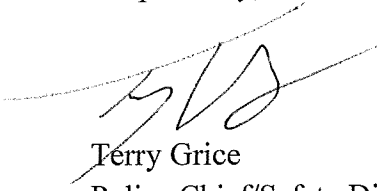
The Ohio Supreme Court decision in *State v. Brown* provided a loophole for those found to be violating the Ohio Revised Code, and caused law enforcement operations to be severely impacted. In that specific case, the driver was found to have illegal drugs in their possession, but based on R.C. 4513.39, the case was dismissed. As I'm sure you are aware, many individuals who traffic illegal narcotics travel our interstates on a daily basis. This impact goes beyond drug offenses. Many arrests for OVI are as a result of traffic violations for which our officers are not permitted to currently enforce on the interstate. Our officers need to have the full resources of the Ohio Revised Code in order to perform their sworn duty.

The 50,000 resident threshold also seems excessively high. Of the 88 counties in the State, 39 counties do not meet the 50,000 resident requirement for the entire county population. There are approximately 1,215 municipalities in the State and only 15, or less than 1.5%, meet the 50,000 threshold. Of the 1,309 townships, there are only seven, less than .5%, that have a population over 50,000.

H.B. 539 is about safety and enforcement, not about ticket revenue and not about taking away jurisdiction from others. Law enforcement is in a position today where it is imperative to work together to achieve great results, this bill allows for future collaborative efforts.

Thank you for your time today. I hope you will support this important public safety bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Grice', written over a horizontal line.

Terry Grice

Police Chief/Safety Director