

Chair Hillyer, Vice-Chair Grendel, Ranking Member Galonski and members of the House Civil Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on House Bill 613

My name is Attorney Charley Kidder and I'm here today to oppose this bill for numerous reasons. I have had the privilege of representing clients in many Courts in Northeast Ohio including East Liverpool Municipal.

You heard testimony last week about this Court being a drain on the city of East Liverpool. However, today's testimony indicates that nothing could be further from the truth. That this Court has collected well more in fines and costs than what it spends on the salaries and benefits of its employees.

Abolishing this Court would also create additional concerns for the police officers of East Liverpool, Liverpool Township and St. Clair Township. These officers, already overworked and underpaid, would be put through an additional hardship if the cases were transferred. The ramifications of sending the officers to the other side of the county to testify in Court will lead to one of two issues, officers on overtime sitting in a now busier Court or officers on duty who are now well outside their jurisdiction.

You also have heard conflicting testimony on the caseload and schedule of this Court. While I do not dispute that the Assistant County Prosecutor is typically there only three days a week, it should be noted that cases filed under the city code are prosecuted by the Assistant City Law Director. While I also do not know how many trials take place in the average year in East Liverpool, I can tell this committee that I alone tried a half dozen cases in East Liverpool in 2021.

The groundwork has been laid by the late Judge Dominic Frank for Columbiana County to have its first Veterans Court. A court that would allow those who gave so much to our country to have an opportunity to turn their life around and get past a difficult hurdle in their life.

East Liverpool Municipal Court is a pillar of the Southern part of Columbiana County and a shining example of Criminal Justice done effectively and efficiently. I would ask all of you to consider both sides of this issue, take time to review the numbers that have been provided, consider the Columbiana County Bar Association's opposition to this matter, continue to debate this and hopefully at the end of the day vote against this legislation.