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House Commerce and Labor Committee Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association House Bill 304 Proponent Testimony

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on House Bill 304.

House Bill 304 will require the State Fire Marshal and Board of Building Standards to adopt rules requiring installation of sealed battery smoke alarms, with a ten-year battery life, in residential buildings when the following occurs:

- Ten years pass from an existing smoke alarm's date of manufacture
- An existing smoke alarm malfunctions or fails to respond to a function test
- Ownership of owner-occupied residential premises changes, and sealed battery smoke alarms that are less than ten years old are not already installed
- A new tenant is scheduled to take possession of premises pursuant to a rental agreement subject to the Ohio Landlord-Tenant Act and sealed battery smoke alarms that are less than ten years old are not already installed
- Alterations or repairs requiring plan approval are made and smoke alarms that are hard-wired into the building's electrical supply are not required as a result of those alterations or repairs

Requires the State Fire Marshal and Board of Building Standards to adopt rules that provide exceptions to the requirement above to allow other specified smoke alarms and detectors to be used in place of the sealed battery smoke alarm. Alternatives could include smoke alarms that receive power from the electrical system of a building; smoke alarms, detectors and ancillary components that are electronically connected as part of a fire alarm system; those that use low-power radio frequency wireless communication signals; and those that use wi-fi, or other

wireless local area networking capability to send and receive notifications to and from the internet, such as early low battery warnings before a critical low power level.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, three out of five home fire deaths result from fires in properties without working smoke alarms. More than one-third (38 percent) of home fire deaths result from fires in which no smoke alarms are present. Additionally, the risk of dying in a home fire is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms. The National Fire Protection Association released a report in February of this year stating similarly that the risk of dying in reported home structure fires is 55 percent lower in homes with working smoke alarms than in homes with no alarms or none that worked. The report also cited power source issues as being the most common factors when smoke alarms failed to operate. These power source issues include dead batteries or smoke alarms with no battery at all, both issues that we believe this legislation will prevent.

House Bill 304 will greatly enhance safety for our Ohio residents. Too often, people have the urge to remove the battery from their smoke detectors either to use for other devices or because it needs replaced while they have no battery to replace it on hand. Study after study cite the dangers of having non-working smoke alarms in a residence. We would like to thank Representative Baldrige for his work on this bill and to the committee for its expediency.

Respectfully,

Steve Kelly
OFCA Policy Committee, Chair