

Tom Patton Sponsor Testimony- HB 626

House Criminal Justice Committee

11/15/22

Chair LaRe, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Leland, and the Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 626. This piece of legislation aims to amend Ohio Revised Code Sections 2921.331, 2927.21, 2929.01, and 2929.13 to modify the penalties for the offense of “failure to comply with an order or signal of a police officer” involving the offender’s operation of a motor vehicle and expressly provide that a motor vehicle used in the offense is subject to possible seizure and forfeiture.

Working with Tim Dobeck, the Law Director for the City of Parma, we learned that Parma’s law enforcement saw a major increase in failure to comply cases during the pandemic, and these cases have still yet to go down. Law Director Dobeck shared an incident with my office earlier this year of a recent Parma Police Department chase, where a man alluding the police on his motorcycle struck a woman’s vehicle, resulting in hospitalization of the woman, and the death of the man fleeing.

Currently, offenders charged under the failure to comply statute commonly receive probation, which is not proportional to the potential harm these drivers pose to the community. See attached for the changes to the penalty.

If enacted, HB 626 would act as a deterrence to all Ohio drivers from failing to comply with an order or signal of a police officer, a reckless act that poses a great threat to not only innocent citizens of our state, but our Law Enforcement Officers.

I would like to thank the Chairman and Committee Members for allowing me to testify today on HB 626.

At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.