



Thomas West

State Representative, 49th House District

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Chair LaRe, Vice-Chair White, and all members of the Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for offering Representative Leland and me the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 307.

House Bill 307 is an incredible piece of legislation that will prohibit law enforcement agencies from using quotas for arrests and citations. This bill will reduce unsubstantiated and ill-motivated arrests and citations by eliminating the use of quotas from a law enforcement agency used to evaluate, promote, compensate, transfer, or discipline a local or state police officer.

It should not be suggested to police officers that they are required or expected to meet a quota of arrests and citations. Attempting to meet a quota of citations and arrests is a burden on the officer and can cause more opportunities for racial bias and misjudgment out of fear of retaliation. Ohioans do not need clouded officers looking to meet a quota.

Contacts with community members that result in repercussion should not be the sole basis by which an officer is deemed to be performing their job responsibilities -- no officer should be going into the community with their guiding principle being "make as many arrests and citations as possible." An officer who excels at punitive measures but never positively engages with the community is not an officer who is completing the full responsibility of their job.

To address this, this bill also requires that constructive contacts with community members—such as wellness checks, public safety discussions, and other positive interactions—be taken into consideration when evaluating that officer. Hopefully this should shift the discussion away from prioritizing arrests and citations where they may not be needed, and toward fostering friendly and beneficial community relationships with police.

The mantra "protect and serve" should be what motivates our law enforcement officers, and quotas are a distraction from that. When an officer is preoccupied with meeting a quota, not

only do they increase the risk of unnecessary confrontations during a stop, they may also fail to notice and/or address crimes in progress elsewhere. Ohio needs principled officers who are focused on keeping communities safe, not distracted officers looking to please their superiors.

Furthermore, this bill mandates the Attorney General to create an anonymous form for any local or state police officer wishing to report the use of quotas in their division. Ohio needs law enforcement officers who prioritize serving and protecting their communities. It is critical that we take action and encourage police officers to embrace a community-focused mindset when serving Ohioans.

We urge that you pass H.B. 307. Thank you again for your time, and should you have any questions, please feel free to send them on to our offices.