



**Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson
44th House District**

House Bill 11 Sponsor Testimony
March 9, 2022

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John and Ranking Member Kelly, Members of State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional remarks in support of House Bill 11. As Representative Sheehy has said, without this bill many law enforcement agencies are not able to fully vet a prospect law enforcement employee. And, may, unfortunately make a bad hire.

HB 11 would set up a database containing the Name and date of birth of the officer; the reason for termination; and the name and telephone number of the law enforcement agency furnishing the information. This central data base, housed in the Attorney General's Office will be an invaluable resource for local law departments.

Additionally, those law enforcement agencies and law enforcement officers who comply with the bill's intent are immune from any civil or criminal liability for carrying out the bill's duties. Additionally, it will grandfather in a collective bargaining agreement between a public employer and an exclusive representative. However, any future agreement would be subject to this law. A person who violates that prohibition is guilty of a fourth degree misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine of not more than \$250 and jail time of not more than 30 days.

Additionally, the bill prohibits a person from knowingly using the information contained in or received from the database with the intent to harass or intimidate another person. A person who violates that prohibition is guilty of a first degree misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 and jail time of not more than 180 days.

Many of you know that I am a lawyer. As a former member of the Ohio Supreme Court's Disciplinary Board, one of the most important tools for people who were planning to hire a lawyer was to check to see whether an attorney was in good standing. This bill is no different. It will allow law enforcement departments the ability to determine if the prospective hire is in good standing.

I have had many conversations with law enforcement personnel, community members, and government officials who question how can trust and confidence be restored between law

enforcement and citizens? This bill is one step in the right direction. “Bringing fairness and dignity to our legal system is one of the most profound civil and human rights issues of our time,” Vision for Justice 2020 and Beyond: A New Paradigm for Public Safety, September, 2019.