



**Representative Joe Miller  
House District 56**

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**House Bill 113 Sponsor Testimony  
March 9, 2022**

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer joint sponsor testimony on House Bill 113.

Our communities across Ohio and the nation as a whole have asked for meaningful change and reform within our police departments. I agree that we have a crisis in law enforcement. There are too many unfilled positions, a distrust in communities, and an overall loss of interest in law enforcement. I believe that change can start from within and that is why Rep. Upchurch and I are introducing this Cadet Program legislation to give local police departments the opportunity to invite community students into the law enforcement profession.

The Cadet Program's main objective is to cultivate and keep local talent. There are far too many students missing out on an opportunity in this profession that want to be leaders and important members of their communities. We are finding that the talent is there but garnering interest has been an obstacle. Nobody knows a community better than the people who live there. Bringing this cultural awareness and familiarity about the areas that the departments directly serve is vital to the reform that Ohioans want. We want to engage young students in our cities and provide another option to further their education.

As earlier stated, there is a shortage of prospective law enforcement professionals and this local model of recruitment could be a great way for our larger cities and also smaller rural areas to fill vacancies. These selected students will be part-time unclassified employees of their

designated police department and also working towards graduating with a police science degree. Each Cadet Program will be aligned with the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) to ensure that students are well prepared to take and pass the civil service exam and also perform well should they continue on this path to OPOTA.

The selection committees that choose these students to participate in the program will comprise five members. These members will include: a representative of the fraternal order of police, the chief of police or a designee of the chief of police in the municipality or city, and 3 members of the community that can include the mayor and other community leaders. The committee will commit to diversity and inclusion under direction from our bill. To reiterate, we believe now, more than ever, it is important that our communities are policed with people who look like them.

In addition to the Cadet Program, we are including the language from HB 130 that involves lateral transfers. Statutory cities are penalized in a way that charter cities are not when incoming officers want to transfer into their police departments. Our language suspends the requirement for competition in these special cases of filling vacancies. During a time where shortages are plentiful and many vacancies are open, we should be making it easier for departments, not harder.

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for your time and my joint-sponsor and I would be happy to answer any questions.