

## 69<sup>th</sup> House District

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## Committees

Criminal Justice

Finance

Finance Subcommittee on Public  
Safety

Homeland Security

Transportation and Public Safety

Kevin D. Miller  
State Representative

## **House Bill 37 Sponsor Testimony**

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown and fellow members of the Criminal Justice Committee, good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to provide joint sponsor testimony on House Bill 37.

The purpose of this legislation is to create appropriate and commensurate penalties for those who commit the offense of aggravated vehicular homicide and have also previously been convicted of an OVI related offense. Let me be clear, this legislation is designed to address repeat offenders whose behavior has resulted in a death of another person. This legislation does not impact first time offenders.

Someone who has been arrested for OVI, knows exactly how severe the consequences can be, and for most offenders, those consequences serve as an effective deterrent to never get behind the wheel while intoxicated again. As a former trooper I can tell you I was thanked on numerous occasions by people I had previously arrested. They told me in essence I had saved their life and possibly others as well. Many vowed they would no longer drink even one beverage and get behind the wheel. But unfortunately, this is not the case for everyone.

Right now, in the State of Ohio, nearly 30% of all OVI arrests are repeat offenders. These offenders have repeatedly decided to put the lives of others at risk all for the sake of their own convenience. The consequences of an OVI conviction were clearly not enough to change their mind and deter their behavior. House Bill 37 sends a strong message to these individuals.

This legislation will hopefully serve as a deterrent but equally as important, we must also consider justice for the family members of the victims. They are the ones who are left to pick up the pieces after their loved ones are tragically taken from them without notice. They are the ones who will never enjoy the company of their loved ones.

While serving in the patrol, I saw this firsthand. It is traumatizing for everyone involved, from the offender and the families to the law enforcement officers who have to deal with these instances far too often.

I can tell you that all death notifications are extremely difficult. I did way more than I care to remember; however, when the notification involved the case of a repeat offender it seemed to rise to a whole different level. Even though the families knew their loved ones were never coming back...they wanted justice. They wanted the appropriate penalty and fines for someone who failed to learn their lesson and ultimately took their loved one from them.

In my opinion House Bill 37 provides the appropriate justice for families like the Wrights and their daughter Liv for whom the bill is named. I ask for your support of this important legislation as it makes its way through the committee process. I appreciate my colleague Representative Johnson for providing me with the opportunity to joint sponsor this bill. Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony and I am happy to take any questions.