

**Ohio's 94<sup>th</sup> District**

Athens County  
Meigs County  
Morgan County  
Washington County (part)



**Committees**

Rules and Reference  
Finance

**Jay Edwards  
Ohio House Finance Chair**

**HB 441 Sponsor Testimony: House Criminal Justice Committee**

Chair Abrams, Vice-Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee.

This bill will help to solve the recruitment and retention issues parole officers face by providing reasons for officers to not only want to work in parole but stay in parole and make it a career. As you will see in the analysis available for members of the committee to review, this bill will include in the Public Employees Retirement System law enforcement division a PERS member who, after the bill's effective date, becomes employed full time as a parole officer by the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction or the Department of Youth Services.

It will also allow parole officers currently employed to participate in the PERS law enforcement division rather than regular PERS, for the members future service. Once these individual parole officers elect to participate, PERS must receive a notice within 90 days after the bills effective date to be considered a PERS law enforcement officer for future service as a parole officer.

HB 441 will deliver respect and equity to parole officers who are often forgotten as law enforcement. They don't receive the same benefits and respect as other law enforcement even though every person they encounter is a convicted criminal. These brave men and women put their lives on the line every day to protect Ohioans and it is about time we give them the respect and dignity they deserve.

Parole is at a crossroads and if HB 441 is not passed, Ohioans and their communities will be the ones to suffer because officers can't sustain the level of caseloads to properly supervise offenders.

Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 441. We would be happy to answer any questions.