

## Meeting Minutes:

Chairman Ghanbari calls the committee meeting at 11:00am.

Chairman Ghanbari calls House Bill 84 for its first hearing.

Representative Demetriou gives sponsor testimony for H.B. eighty-four. To lower the minimum age of an original appointment as a police officer from twenty-two to eighteen years of age.

Representative Williams gives sponsor testimony for H.B. eighty-four. The decreasing funding for police departments, this legislation will allow for more opportunities to work with the budget that they are currently working with. There are already other states that allow for eighteen year olds to serve as police officers.

Ranking Member Thomas makes a statement regarding that the maturity of the job required is important and it would be concerning to allow for eighteen to twenty-one year olds to serve. He asks a question about broadening their recruitment in other ways.

Representative Demetriou responds and states the first responder community has expressed a need for the hiring challenges and this will create a pathway for future legislation for funding efforts.

Representative Williams responds as well and states it is already enshrined in the Ohio Constitution that 18 year olds are allowed to serve as police officers as cities and municipalities decide. The bill would only enshrine in the Ohio Revised Code what is already the law.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if the goal of the legislation is to assist with hiring needs.

Representative Demetriou responds that this is an element however the police leaders should have the final decision on who they hire.

Ranking Member Thomas responds that there is still an issue with the maturity aspect for all eighteen year olds. He states it will take up to five years of additional training for younger officers and they could ultimately cause more damage than good that this legislation intends. He believes it may be best if we consider working on a higher pay for officers in order to solve the issue of vacancies. He asks where in the legislation do you establish a standard to solve the vacancies.

Representative Williams responds that this legislation is already in effect in the cities and municipalities and they can already make the decision to hire eighteen year olds. This legislation only codifies this into the ORC. He states they have looked at more funding, however it is still important to allow for the police agencies to have the decision on the maturity of the people they hire.

Representative Creech states that it is a good point that you can serve your country but you cannot serve as a police officer. He then asks what the police groups, such as the Fraternal Order of Police have stated regarding this legislation.

Representative Demetriou responds that most groups are neutral. There are some different organizations such as the Fraternal Order of Police that are neutral and there are some proponents that they would like to bring in.

Representative Adam Miller asks why the bill does not address non-civil services jurisdictions.

Representative Williams responds no and that this is only to reflect the Ohio Constitution intent.

Representative Adam Miller follows up and states that this could be a drafting oversight and would the sponsors be willing to include small towns.

Representative Williams responds yes and that this could be amended and be made uniform system for all jurisdictions across Ohio.

Representative Adam Miller follows up and states that they have heard some concerns regarding the retirement systems.

Representative Williams responds that they have met with the FOP and that there could be follow up legislation to address the retirement issues.

Representative Abrams asks if they are eighteen and serves for thirty years, they will be forty-eight. She states her concern lies in making sure the pension would be there when they are ready to retire. She also states that when you are serving your daily shift, you are alone on a call and she has concerns for allowing 18 year olds to serve alone. She also states that the state of Ohio has continued to fund police and that the way to solve the issue is to allow the police to do their jobs.

Representative Demetriou states that he believes we should trust our police leaders to make these hiring decisions and how they would like to run their department internally.

Representative Williams states that it is more than just funding, there is a social movement that brings down morale for defunding and restricting how they serve. He states that there will be a hiring need regardless and therefore the legislature should give the departments the ability to decide what is best. Our police leaders in Ohio have already shown they are responsible enough because in Akron they are already practicing this hiring ability and they have hired as young as 20 and a half.

Representative Demetriou states that he will follow up with answers for the pension system.

Representative Mohamed states that maturity is an issue and there should be a consideration for an amendment to require the department to pair these 18 year olds with a senior officer.

Representative Williams responds that they have considered this amendment however the departments may not have the manpower to accomplish this and therefore would unfavorably affect smaller departments. He states that they have considered an amendment to require more training hours.

Representative Mohamed states that 18 year olds are less able to make mature choices due to their scientific development on a physical level in their brains.

Representative Creech follows up on Representative Mohamed and states that in these small departments, there are young police officers in training in the local corrections facilities. This will create a funnel away from corrections facilities.

Representative Williams responds that this is mainly about not micro-managing the agencies and their needs right now.

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and states that there is competition between employers and there is a competitive market that will compete for these eighteen year olds. He states that they will strive to go to departments that pay more, such as big cities like Cincinnati.

Representative Williams responds that the bill creates a fair market so this competition can exist. He also states that there are other motivators besides pay such as loyalty to their community and family that will cause these people to stay in their communities if selected by that department.

Representative Demetriou follows up and states that they will follow up to find more best practices from the city of Cincinnati.

Ranking Member Thomas states that this bill will not increase morale and the social movement will always be around to decrease morale.

Representative Demetriou states that they still wish to allow for police departments to decide what is best for their department's morale.

Representative Kevin Miller follows up and states that he has concerns for lowering the age as far as maturity. He states that the organizations that are neutral will decide how this bill moves. He asks if there are higher disciplinary issues for younger officers.

Representative Williams states that disciplinary records are difficult to track because their records can be private or instances can be removed after three years. He states that there has not been a spike in instances as far as he has found.

Representative Kevin Miller asks what the origin of the legislation is.

Representative Demetriou states that Senator Roegner has approached them originally as well as rural departments have had the most interest in this bill.

Representative Williams states that the interest in the bill came from his own experience.

Representative Kevin Miller follows up on the example of military service to modify the bill to be changed from eighteen to twenty years old instead.

Representative Williams states that there is the possibility for an amendment. He states that it is up to the committee to decide what may be best for the bill; however, the starting point was eighteen.

Vice Chair Plummer follows up and states that twenty years old may be better and offer scholarships to these jobs to go to school from eighteen to twenty. He states that eighteen year olds are not ready and with this education they may stick with the police departments.

Chairman Ghanbari follows up and states that under the Highway patrol they were looking at working on the higher end of age due to the age limit. Chairman Ghanbari commends the committee on it's questions as well as the sponsors answers.

Representative Brent asks if they have researched the effectiveness in the five states that do hire at eighteen.

Representative Demetriou responds that there are 14 states that allow for this and will address this in future hearings. He states as far as results what they have found is there is a difficulty finding data.

Representative Brent states that she says five because there are only five that allows you to start at 18. She also states that chiefs around the state have not said they were informed or questioned on this bill and she would like to know who the sponsors asked.

Representative Demetriou states he spoke with chiefs and sheriffs in his district as well as the Fraternal Order of Police.

Representative Williams states that they will continue to ask for witness testimony as the committee process moves forward.

Representative Brent asks if there is a desire to have implicit bias training or related trainings.

Representative Williams states there is no desire to micro-manage the agencies as far as their trainings.

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and asks if the sponsors are open to an interested party meeting.

Representative Demetriou states that yes and they would like to follow up and set up a meeting for the interested parties.

Ranking Member Thomas states that he would like to have any interested party brought to the meeting.

Representative Williams states that if there are interested parties then they are welcome to meet with them however they are welcome to join the committee process.

Chairman Ghanbari concludes the hearing of House Bill 84.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for the second hearing of House Bill 29.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for Patrick Higgins to provide proponent testimony.

Patrick Higgins states that the ACLU supports HB 29 because this would allow for mobility for the constituents who need it the most. He states that this will set up the community to fail and further restrict those who do pay child support.

Representative Adam Miller asks what the witness has been hearing from similar populations from other states.

Patrick Higgins states that he has not spoken with these other states, however, he will follow up with data.

Representative Adam Miller asks if this legislation will not restrict the collection of child support, it only allows for the ability to remove restrictions on these individuals driver's licenses.

Patrick Higgins responds that yes this is only regarding the debt.

Ranking Member Thomas states that this bill is going in the right direction and states that this is critical. Patrick Higgins states that he agrees.

Representative Kevin Miller states that there is concern for this bill's exclusion for the payment of insurance. He states that this does directly involve a vehicle and therefore is important.

Patrick Higgins responds that he will follow up.

Chairman Ghanbari calls up witness Tim Johnson.

Tim Johnson states that he supports this bill because there is a special need to allow individuals who pay child support to have the ability to drive. This is because the court systems will continue to penalize positive behaviors of paying for child support.

Representative Adam Miller asks how his job has time on the flight line has affected his opinion.

Tim Johnson responds that his time in law enforcement matured him and brought him to his current experience level. He states that when the court system continues to charge these people with crimes it will only bury them in debt. He states that driving is the only means of income that these people can rely on.

Chairman Ghanbari concludes the hearing on HB 29.

Chairman Ghanbari adjourns the meeting at 12:29pm.