

Meeting Minutes:

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

Chairman Ghanbari calls the 4th hearing of House Bill 29 and gives a brief introduction of the bill.

Chairman Ghanbari recognizes Vice Chair Plummer to bring House Bill 29 to the floor for a vote.

The committee votes 10-0 in favor of House Bill 29. The bill is favorably reported.

Chairman Ghanbari calls the 2nd hearing of House Bill 84.

Representative Willis gives proponent testimony and states the age restriction should be removed because the qualified 18-21 year olds will be divided from the young aspiring officers who are not ready. Additionally, there are already 18-21 year olds who can already be police on military bases and they should be able to serve the public as well.

Chairman Ghanbari asks if there was any off-base jurisdiction of the military personal that Representative Willis saw over.

Representative Willis responds that there was some shared jurisdiction.

Chairman Ghanbari asks if there was a way for these federal officers to become OPOTA certified.

Representative Willis responds the process is convoluted and therefore there is not an option to get these officers OPOTA certified.

Chairman Ghanbari invites Officer Finley to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 84.

Officer Finley states she supports House Bill 84 because if an 18-21 year old should be able to serve in the military they should also be able to serve the public. Additionally, only the most qualified 18-21 year olds will be able to pass their OPOTA training.

Representative Brent asks what sort of trainings these young officers need to be ready for their roll.

Officer Finley responds the field training is a start to becoming qualified as a young officer. She then asks Representative Brent to repeat her question.

Representative Brent clarifies that she would like to know what training young officers must go through compared to older adults to make sure they are ready.

Officer Finley responds the field training has a lot of hours required, for example, she had gone through 800 hours of training and she has 16 more weeks of training.

Representative Brent clarifies that she was looking for the exact trainings and not the hours that the officers need to go through.

Officer Finley responds the training that is currently given is sufficient. Additionally, each department can search for alternative additional trainings if they believe that will assist their officers in the line of duty.

Chairman Ghanbari follows up and states that Officer Finley is still in training and there is additional training available for police departments to seek through their process.

Representative Abrams follows up and states that in Cincinnati they were required to take diversity and implicit bias training for at least four hours for every officer.

Representative Mohamed follows up and asks if the younger officers have to have more supervision.

Officer Finley responds that she is closely supervised and has to go through multiple stages of command for all calls.

Representative Mohamed asks if the 18-21 year olds have a limitation based on their overall experience as an officer.

Officer Finley responds that these individuals would have the same amount of training as an officer hired at 21.

Representative Mohamed clarifies that he would like to know if the lack of life experiences on calls such as mental health will directly impact their service as an officer.

Officer Finley responds that she does not believe so and each person grows up in different circumstances and therefore each officer will have a unique perspective on their service.

Ranking Member Thomas notes that she looks as though she is 16 and asks if she has had training with urban communities.

Officer Finley responds that she has.

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and states that when he was 21 as a police officer, an officer was killed in the line of duty. He then asks if she has experienced an officer being killed in the line of duty in her department.

Officer Finley responds that she has not.

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and he states that the difference between the lack of these experiences is she may not have been challenged to understand if she understand the risks of this job.

Officer Finley asks for him to restate.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if she has second thoughts over being a police officer.

Officer Finley responds that she has but she feels as though she was called her by her faith and is confident in her decision.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if she has pulled her firearm.

Officer Finley responds that she has.

Ranking Member Thomas asks when she had to pull her firearm.

Officer Finley responds during an undercover sting there were multiple occupants in a vehicle and she was told to pull her firearm.

Representative Creech follows up and states most people don't have to pull or even fire their weapon. Therefore, this should not be something that defines an officer.

Chairman Ghanbari interjects and thanks Officer Finley for coming in and recognizes the passion for the bill.

Chairman Hall thanks Officer Finley for coming into committee.

Representative Brent asks how to keep police officers in the field.

Officer Finley responds that it is in part due to the administration and the lack of pay.

Representative Adam Miller states he sees the logic for the bill and he encourages Officer Finley to look forward. He then asks if this is a bill that should allow departments to hire officers at 18 now and why not before.

Officer Finley responds that she cannot respond to why not before but she believes that the departments should have the option to search for the qualified officers.

Chairman Ghanbari follows up and asks how long she has for Field Training Officer program.

Officer Finley responds she has three weeks remaining.

Chairman Ghanbari requests a ride-along and wishes her good luck.

Chairman Ghanbari calls Officer William Hayes for proponent testimony for House Bill 84.

The committee watches a video from the news regarding Officer Hayes' services.

Officer Hayes gives testimony stating that House Bill 84 should be considered and passed because he could not have pursued his career choice unless his town allowed hiring 18 year olds for law enforcement. When he decided he wanted to be an officer, he was only 18 at the time. He then discovered he could serve in his town of Pataskala. He was hired due to his qualifications and his higher chain of command decided that he was mature enough to serve. Therefore, the interested police department should have the option to allow for unique cases like his to be heard and considered.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if he was able to be hired at 19 then why is this bill needed.

Officer Hayes responds that his city is unique in that they have their own charter that allows for this hiring process. Other cities do not have this option available to them.

Chairman Ghanbari asks if he is now on the road by himself and how many people recognize him from the evening news.

Officer Hayes responds that he does ride by himself now and that a fair amount of people recognize him from the news. For most cars that he pulls over he is able to know who they are without even having to run their plates.

Chairman Ghanbari asks what the population in Pataskala is.

Officer Hayes states that the population is 18,000.

Chairman Ghanbari asks if he is planning to retire from this police department.

Officer Hayes responds that he is planning on retiring from Pataskala.

Chairman Ghanbari asks what type of calls he receives and what shift does he work.

Officer Hayes responds that he works day shift and they receive calls that are from a wide variety.

Chairman Ghanbari thanks him for his testimony before the committee.

Chairman Ghanbari recognizes the three sets of written proponent testimony from Kent Scarrett, Kyle Brooks, and interested party testimony from Mary Beth Foley. He then recognizes Bryan Dickerson for proponent testimony.

Bryan Dickerson states that he supports House Bill 84 because he has personally trained many of these 18-21 year olds and has seen how well they can perform. He then states that he believes what the previous officers before him is true and he opens himself to questions.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if he has a training facility.

Bryan Dickerson responds that they do and they intend on opening it soon.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if he believes a cadet program would be more efficient instead of allowing these 18-21 year olds to carry a firearm and serve right out of high school.

Bryan Dickerson responds that the cadet programs are not recognized as often anymore and therefore it would be more efficient to hire 18 year olds

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and asks why he believes these 18 year olds are qualified.

Bryan Dickerson states that this distinction falls on the department to decide whether or not they are qualified.

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and asks why they should change the constitution in order to fill a hiring gap. He emphasizes in urban areas the crime can be more violent and opening the field for 18 year olds would put them at higher risk.

Bryan Dickerson states that crime is everywhere. The police departments are currently not allowing these officers to do felony stops and be on high-risk calls alone. Therefore, this should not prevent them from being hired onto the police force.

Ranking Member Thomas states that these departments could allow these officers to take on these high-risk stops. He then asks why they should change the law.

Bryan Dickerson states that the law is currently holding back the police departments. Additionally, if these 18 year olds can serve in the military, then they can serve as an officer.

Representative Abrams asks if the 18 year olds served they would have to serve for until they are 52 years old in order to retire from the Ohio Police and Fire Pension fund. Then they would be required another eight years to qualify for the DROP program. She then asks if this is reasonable to put on the officer for wear and tear of their minds and bodies.

Bryan Dickerson responds no.

Representative Abrams states that they must be aware that all parties involved must be aware of this wear and tear and how it will affect the officer.

Bryan Dickerson responds that he agrees.

Representative Abrams asks how many officers are currently serving on the streets on their own in the country.

Bryan Dickerson responds a great deal of states are hiring these 18 year olds. He then gives the example of Michigan and Indianapolis. He also states there are other departments besides police officers that could hire these 18 year olds such as the Bureau for Liquor Control. Lastly, he states that he disagrees with the chairperson and that the officer's physical appearance will not greatly hinder their service as an officer.

Representative Abrams then asks how many out of the local enforcement agencies employ 18 year olds in the state.

Chairman Ghanbari asks Bryan Dickerson to explain his previous statement regarding how the physical characteristics affect the policing field.

Bryan Dickerson clarifies that he did not mean Chairman Ghanbari. He states he was referencing the statement by Ranking Member Thomas regarding his statement that Cami Finley looked like she was 16.

Chairman Ghanbari notes again that there are the three written testimonies on the iPads and requests these be reviewed. He then adjourns committee at 12:09.

Chairman Ghanbari

Ranking Member Thomas