

**Representatives**

Cindy Abrams  
Willis E. Blackshear, Jr.  
Juanita O. Brent  
Sara P. Carruthers  
Rodney Creech  
Steve Demetriou  
Thomas Hall  
Adam C. Miller  
Kevin D. Miller  
Ismail Mohamed



**Chairman**

Haraz N. Ghanbari

**Vice-Chairman**

Phil Plummer

**Ranking Member**

Cecil Thomas

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# HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

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## Meeting Minutes | June 7, 2023

Chairman Ghanbari called the committee to order at 11:00 a.m.

Chairman Ghanbari calls HB 167 for its first hearing.

Representative Miranda gives sponsors testimony for HB 167. She states HB 167 is designed to update the current training standards for newly appointed police chiefs. It will provide more exact and efficient training overall for these newly selected police chiefs by making these trainings more easily accessible.

Representative Abrams gives sponsor testimony for HB 167. She states HB 167 allows officers at the rank of sergeant or above to take trainings to better their own efficiency in their roles.

Representative Kevin Miller asks for a clarification on what the training requirement would be.

Representative Abrams responds that the trainings would be those that involve higher leadership trainings.

Representative Brent asks if there are police chiefs that are not full time because the bill specifies newly full-time police chiefs.

Representative Abrams responds that most are but some are not.

Representative Brent asks if there is a fiscal impact of this bill.

Representative Miranda responds that there are no fiscal changes and that a fiscal analysis should be ready for the second hearing. She states that there will be less of a burden on local governments and it will be easier to provide this training because new chiefs will not have to go to London, Ohio. Instead, they will have the option to take the course in a regional training.

Ranking member Thomas asks if this bill is a fix to a problem that we have seen.

Representative Abrams responds that this bill would allow regional training in order to allow for a closer training facility while still retaining a large portion of the chiefs in order to allow for relation building to still occur between the chiefs in Ohio.

Representative Miranda clarifies that the bill will also allow for ranks such as a sergeant to be able to take these training classes as well.

Representative Abrams reiterates that the addition to lower ranks being able to attend these classes is new.

Ranking member Thomas clarifies that he was asking this because the lack of training for new chiefs had been an issue during previous years. Therefore, he wanted to make sure that this was a provision that was being provided in this bill.

Representative Kevin Miller asks if he took this training as a rank below chief, would it be required to re-take this training.

Representative Abrams responds yes because the training for the lower ranks would be separate and unique to those ranks

Chairman Ghanbari calls HB 176 for its first hearing.

Representative Grim states HB 176 establishes a ten dollar contribution. The second change in the bill is it will allow motorcycle riders to apply for the carpentry license plate as well.

Representative Brent asks if there has been a sign up for those who will sign up for the new fee.

Representative Grim clarifies that this bill will create the allocation for the ten dollar donation.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for HB 205 for its first hearing.

Representative Swearingen gives testimony on HB 205. He states that HB 205 will apply to turn around construction work at the sites listed in the bill. It also creates a credential for 80 percentage of the workforce through apprenticeships and the other 20 percent will be based on their hours worked.

Vice-Chair Plummer gives testimony on HB 205. He states that HB 205 will move Ohio in the right direction to protect our workforce and make sure that they are safe when they are on site.

Representative Demetriou asks are there any major changes to this bill that will differ from the same bill from the last general assembly.

Representative Swearingen states that there is a change from the last General Assembly and the new requirement is that you must be proficient in English.

Representative Plummer clarifies that this is in the bill because it is an added safety risk to not be able to communicate efficiently if you do not speak English.

Representative Brent asks what bill was the similar bill from the previous General Assembly that is being referenced.

Representative Swearingen states that it was HB 235 of the 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for the first hearing of SB 53.

Senator Roegner gives sponsor testimony for SB 53. She states that SB 53 is going to assist each police department to help assist in the lack of officers in each community. She clarifies that lowering the minimum age for police officers to 18 will only be permissive.

Senator Reynolds gives sponsor testimony for SB 53. She states that SB 53 will assist in filling the gaps that are being left by the mass buyout program that is retiring police officers. Lateral transfers has been a solution offered to fill this gap, however this has not been working because it has caused the draining of officers in small local police departments. She compares the profession of firefighting and serving in

the military and states that those individuals are able to serve in these high threat situations. However, those considering becoming a law enforcement officer must wait until they are 21, causing them a massive loss in money that they could have earned if they had the opportunity to enter the service sooner.

Ranking Member Thomas states that he is concerned about giving an 18 year old a firearm and putting them in the police service. He asks if the senators have considered other alternatives to curve the shortage in the workforce.

Senator Roegner responds that she has personally heard from leaders across her district that there is a shortage that needs to be fixed. She states they are open to work with the committee for amendments to improve the bill and attract individuals into the profession in other additional ways.

Ranking Member Thomas follows up and asks why the bill is necessary if municipalities can already hire at 18.

Senator Roegner states that this would allow other communities to streamline the process.

Representative Brent asks how this bill will be effective to stop the drainage of officers leaving the force. She also states that the population of Pataskala is only 18,000 and this population cannot be compared to larger cities.

Senator Reynolds states this will likely not be a solution for an urban department. It is more for assisting the municipalities that are facing this issue. She clarifies that this bill should allow the department to trust their police chief to decide if these applying officers are ready.

Representative Brent states there should be additional training for these officers to try and attempt to better prepare them for the life experience that they lack. She also states that there are plenty of cities that have 1,000 people in them and even these cities police chiefs still stated they will not support the bill.

Senator Roegner responds the bill is permissive and therefore Representative Brent should offer this up to the people in her district.

Representative Brent states that the people that Senator Roegner spoke to also said no.

Senator Roegner states that cities like Pataskala have taken the permissive provision into account and they have decided that there are young officers that they could hire

Senator Reynolds states that the Ohio Municipal League is supportive of this bill and there are several sheriff's offices are supportive of the bill as well.

Senator Roegner states that there was an amendment that they concerned to remove a maximum age to the bill as well and they chose not to accept it because they wanted to take into account the pension reform needed.

Senator Reynolds states again that they are open to amendments that include training.

Chairman Ghanbari states that there is not a cap on ages but the committee should vet that issue out and consider it.

Senator Roegner states that there is an age cap.

Representative Abrams asks how many departments are currently arming 18 year olds in the state.

Senator Reynolds states that she is unsure besides the example of Pataskala however she will follow up.

Representative Abrams states that the departments that are hiring at 20 and a half are not allowing these officers to patrol at this age because they are training until they are 21. She also states that she has spoken with her large departments and small departments in her district and at all sizes every officer said no. The way to solve the police force crisis is to support them in the communities and through cadet training.

Senator Roegner states that she should re-discuss this issue with the departments and discuss more that the bill is permissive.

Representative Hall states that Representative Williams and Representative Demetriou have done a great job at running this bill as well. He also states that his county prosecutor's office has come out in support of this bill. Representative Hall points out that there has been 22 shootings in Hamilton County and therefore Chief Theetge testimony should be disregarded since she cannot control her own city.

Senator Reynolds states that not every 18 year old is ready and she agrees with Representative Abrams on this point.

Senator Roegner states that Representative Williams and Representative Demetriou have been great partners to work this bill.

Ranking Member Thomas asks if there are any cities that cannot take advantage of home rule to hire these 18 year olds.

Senator Reynolds states that she is unsure at this time but she will follow up.

Representative Blackshear asks if they would consider adding more provisions for their duties in the field.

Senator Roegner states that they are willing to entertain any idea however they should be thoughtful to consider the local departments on their own best judgement.

Representative Blackshear asks what the downsides of this legislation are in their opinion.

Senator Reynolds states that she believes her own sons would not be ready for this position. However, she knows that there are some young people out there who are capable of serving and she does not want to hold them back.

Chairman Ghanbari concludes the committee at 11:58 a.m.