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Democratic Whip
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Chair Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Homeland Security Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 167.

House Bill 167 is a simple and bipartisan effort to update the Ohio Revised Code where it concerns police training and the role of the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy Commission. This bill is broadly supported by police officers, the OPOTA Commission and the Office of the Attorney General.

Every new job requires training -- whether it is a line cook learning how their restaurant preps food, or a scientist learning how to use lab equipment. Newly appointed police chiefs have standardized training that cover a range of topics as determined by the OPOTA Commission. This bill modifies training requirements for police chiefs and allows the OPOTA Commission to establish and have more control over advanced training for officers at or above the rank of sergeant.

This bill provides more exact, effective and efficient training.

- It clarifies that 8 hours of the 40 hour training requirement may be exempt from training.
- It specifies that a “newly appointed” chief is one who has never held the full time position before, rather than one who did not hold the office on the date the person was appointed.
- It permits training to take place at approved sites, alleviating police chief’s time and resources so that they are not required to travel too far outside their communities and get back to serving the people they have taken an oath to protect and serve.
- It allows the Commission to establish and conduct trainings that can be offered to law enforcement officers at or above the rank of sergeant.

This bill does not pose any additional regulations or restrictions. This bill makes it easier and more cost efficient for police chiefs to fulfill their training requirements.

Under current law, our new police chiefs are required to take a new chief of police training course. It's a 40 hour course, conducted by OPOTC, Ohio peace officer training commission, held in Columbus. Our new chiefs appreciate this training course and the networking and education that come from it. At the same time, they see the potential to have more localized new chief trainings at the Regional Training Facilities where they can network with the chiefs they will continue to work with, while allowing for their departments to save money on lodging and costs of meals they would have when they come to Columbus for training, which House Bill 167 achieves.

House Bill 167 as mentioned before allows officers at the rank of sergeant or above to take advanced trainings to benefit them in their supervisory roles. During a recent visit to a police department in my district, the chief asked about OPOTC creating a sergeant and above course. As our patrol officers answer calls for service, a citizen sometimes asks to speak to an officer's supervisor, and it is likely a sergeant or lieutenant will respond, not the chief. As many of you already know, I believe in training. I thought this was a great idea to offer a front line supervisor training for our sergeants and above.

It is important to note that the changes to the trainings in this legislation is still monitored and supervised by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission. They will keep track of when the trainings are taking place, how many supervisors will be attending, and ultimately approve each training scheduled to occur outside of Columbus. This is all to ensure that our police supervisors will be receiving the same benefits of training and networking that they would receive if it were still taking place in Columbus.

Our police supervisors are at their best when they are the most prepared. In the near future you will hear from the experts, our Attorney General, OPOTC, our regional training centers and police chiefs and supervisors. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony today. We welcome any questions you may have.