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State Representative House District 53

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and the members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on HB 241, which would grant police departments the power to fill vacant positions in civil service without an exam if the department can present evidence that the competitive component of exams is deemed unnecessary, and the applicant has exceptional qualifications. This bill aligns the same opportunity for statutory cities as charter cities in hiring law enforcement, as well as grant police chiefs the ability to run training programs for cadets.

As the sponsors of this legislation, we believe the civil service process helps determine qualified candidates and still holds value by curbing nepotism and favoritism, however it has proven to be impractical when regarding lateral transfers.

Currently, under the civil service process when a department seeks to hire an officer, time is needed to not only post the position but also to schedule a test and wait for results.

In Ohio, Police Departments located in statutory cities must go through this process, however, a charter city can immediately hire a qualified officer and avoid the civil service process. Filling positions with veteran officers avoids excess time and money and allows for a trained officer to immediately make an impact. It is our goal to help the police force work more effectively for community members and get well-trained officers out into the field.

HB 241 was amended in committee to allow municipal police chiefs the ability to conduct training schools for prospective law enforcement officers that align with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy standards, and offer equivalent qualification and placement for the prospective officers in the unclassified civil service. HB 241 passed both the House Homeland Security Committee and House Floor with unanimous votes.

We again would like to thank Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Craig, and the members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee for hearing our testimony today. We are more than happy to field any questions the committee may have.

