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# OHIO FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION 2022 CONFERENCE REPORT

## Legislative Committee

President Kidd and the members of the Association:

It is my pleasure to submit the Legislative Committee report for the year ending June 30, 2022. Since last year's conference, the Board of Directors on recommendation of the Legislative Committee have taken an official position on several pieces of proposed legislation.

### **HB445 – Revise 911 and emergency telecommunicator laws**

Sponsors: Former Rep. Rick Carfagna (R-Genoa Township) - replaced on the bill by Rep. Haraz Ghanbari (R-Perrysburg) and Kent Smith (D-Euclid)

- This legislation accomplishes the important goal of constructing a statewide next-generation 9-1-1 system.
- Under a statewide next generation 911 system, as outlined in HB 445, all Ohioans, no matter where they live, would experience:
  - Voice and integrated text-to-9-1-1, from traditional and new devices, with the best possible location information, including location data from the device and available geographic information system (GIS) data.
  - Calls easily transferred between jurisdictions, with increased collaboration to improve emergency outcomes.
  - Significant reduction in the chance that any 9-1-1 call in the State of Ohio will ever go unanswered.
- These upgrades would be funded by a 70-cent surcharge assessed monthly on wireless communications or services.

**OFCA Position:** Support

**Status:** The bill has had four hearings in House Transportation and Public Safety

### **HB485 Requirements for Drone Operation**

Sponsor: Rep. Adam Holmes (R-Nashport)

- No person shall operate an unmanned aerial vehicle:
  - In the air space over this state if the operation is prohibited by federal law or the FAA.
  - Or in a manner that interferes with operations or activities conducted by law enforcement personnel, fire department personnel, or emergency medical services personnel while such personnel is on duty.
  - Or to intentionally photograph, record, or loiter over or near a critical facility in furtherance of any criminal offense.
- Local government entities will be allowed to regulate the use of drones owned by the local government entity AND the use of drones that are used for hobby or recreational purposes in a park or other public property owned by the local government entity.

**OFCA Position:** Support

**Status:** Has had one hearing in House Criminal Justice Committee

### **HB 509 REVISE OCCUPATIONAL REGULATIONS**

Sponsors: Rep. Marilyn John (R-Shelby), Rep. Sarah Fowler Arthur (R-Ashtabula)

- House Bill 509, as passed by the Ohio House, would reduce the continuing education requirement for firefighters from 54 hours every three-year certification cycle to 36 hours.
- The legislation had one hearing in Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee on May 25th but did not have any further action before the summer break.
- OFCA has met with the sponsors, Chairman Terry Johnson, and members of the committee to express our concerns with any reduction of continuing education hours in HB 509.
- We plan to testify at any future hearings and will be asking the Senate to remove this provision from the bill.

**OFCA Position:** Oppose the changes to firefighter continuing education

**Status:** Passed the House on March 23rd and has had one hearing in Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee.

### **HB564 (KOEHLER) and SB299 (SCHAFFER)/ HB 377- EXPAND THE CATEGORY OF TOWNSHIP EMPLOYEES CONSIDERED PART-TIME FOR HEALTH CARE**

- On the last day of session before summer break, a version of this legislation was amended into another bill, House Bill 377, which was then passed by both the House and Senate. It is now awaiting Governor DeWine's signature.
- The final language only applies to townships that employ less than 50 full-time equivalent employees and only applies to their fire and EMS personnel. For those township employees, the annual cap is raised from 1,500 hours to 1,976 hours.

**OFCA Position:** Support

**Status:** Signed by Governor DeWine on June 28, 2022

## **HB 472 POLITICAL SUBDIVISION LIABILITY**

Sponsor: Rep. Catherine Ingram (D-Cincinnati)

- House Bill 472 would remove governmental immunities afforded when police, fire, and EMS personnel are operating a motor vehicle while responding to an emergency call.
- The OFCA has joined other local government stakeholders in opposing HB 472 which would cause significant unintended consequences for local governments and first responders.
- The bill had four hearings in May with OFCA providing opponent testimony at the 3rd hearing on May 24th. The bill did not receive a committee vote and had no further movement before the summer break.

**OFCA Position:** Oppose

**Status:** The bill has had 4 hearings in House Civil Justice.

## **HOUSE BILL 545 – Peer Support**

Sponsors: Reps. Cindy Abrams (R-Harrison) and Brian Baldrige (R-Winchester),

- HB 545 would generally make communications between a first responder and a peer support team member confidential. HB545 would also ensure that peer support team members receive the proper training – mandating 16-hours of initial peer support training and 8-hours of continuing education every two years to qualify for the confidentiality provisions of the bill. It also requires that peer support team members have an affiliation with an organization or association that can validate their training requirements and their individual knowledge, skills, and ability to serve in this crucial role.

**OFCA Position:** Support

**Status:** House Bill 545 passed the Ohio House on a vote of 89-0 on May 18th. It is currently pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

## **HB 563 LIMIT LOCAL REGULATION OF SHORT-TERM RENTAL PROPERTY**

(Fowler, Ferguson) To limit local regulation of short-term rental property.

**Sponsors:** Reps. Fowler Arthur (R-Ashtabula) and Ferguson (R-Wintersville)

- Prohibits a county, township, or municipal corporation from adopting or enforcing any regulation or restriction that (1) prohibits short-term rental properties or (2) regulates the number, duration, or frequency of rental periods for short-term rental properties.
- Provides an exception to the prohibition described above if the regulation or restriction affecting short-term rental properties is enforced in the same manner as for similar properties that are not short-term rental properties and is enacted for a limited purpose as specified in the bill.

**Status:** Had four hearings in House State and Local Govt and was voted out of committee. It is awaiting a House floor vote.

**OFCA Position:** Oppose

## **SB340 CREATE WORKFORCE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

Senators Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) and Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville)

- Establishes a two-year Workforce Voucher Program at the Department of Development for students pursuing a degree, certification or license in an “in demand job”. (Firefighter, EMT, and Paramedic are all currently considered in-demand jobs).

- The maximum annual amount of a voucher that may be awarded to an eligible student shall be the lesser of five thousand dollars or seventy-five per cent of the cost of tuition during the academic year.
- Creates a student loan tax credit equal to ten per cent of the amount of principal and interest paid by the graduate student loan for recipients of a voucher employed in an in-demand job.

**OFCA Position:** Support

**Status:** SB 340 was introduced on May 17th and referred to the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

I would like to thank the association for allowing me to serve as the Chair of it's Legislative Committee. It is my honor to work with such an outstanding group of professionals. Also, the Legislative Committee meets on the second Monday of each month to discuss legislative proposals impacting our industry. We are always looking for additional members who want to be active and engaged in legislative issues impacting emergency services. If you are interested in joining a committee, please contact the OFCA office and let the staff know.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Steve Agenbroad*

Steve Agenbroad, MPA, EFO, OFC, CFO