

House Transportation, Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee
Proponent Testimony
HB 128 Ambulance Staffing
March 16, 2011

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Heidi Fought and I am the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Ohio Township Association (OTA). On behalf of the OTA, thank you for the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 128, which revises the requirements for staffing ambulances.

Many citizens and organizations are calling on local governments to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. Townships are trying to be proactive but there are sections of the Ohio Revised Code that can be restrictive and prohibiting. For example, Palmyra Township in Portage County, which utilizes volunteers and part-time personnel, researched the possibility of reducing response times and costs by partnering with neighboring townships for emergency runs. The plan was to have only one full-time person on call at a township at any given time, thus reducing personnel costs and response times.

Unfortunately, the current language in ORC §4765.43 prohibits this because a minimum of two responders must be in the ambulance for the emergency run if the organizations utilize volunteers less than 50 percent of the time. Even small to medium sized paid fire and EMS departments are having difficulty complying with this law, as often they have reduced staff levels during different parts of the day. House Bill 128 will help Palmyra Township, and others, address their service needs and will provide small and medium paid departments maximum staffing flexibility.

The Ohio Township Association strongly supports HB 128 and we encourage your favorable passage of this measure. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you this afternoon. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.