

Ohio House of Representatives



State Representative Bob Peterson Ohio House District 85

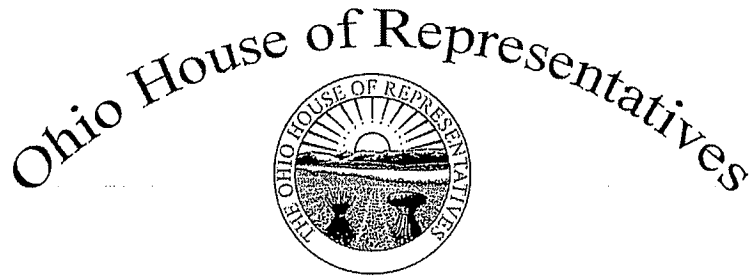
Sponsor Testimony, House Bill 128
Wednesday, March 09, 2011

Good afternoon Chairman Combs and Ranking Member Mallory. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 128. I am glad to join Representative Carey in attempting to give necessary flexibility in providing emergency medical services to areas of Ohio that are unfortunately struggling to provide these services due to limited funding and limited staff availability. These issues are important to our smallest communities and their EMS providers.

The best example I can give you of the necessity of this bill is situational. If one of my neighbors in our small rural township has a medical emergency, I am not the person you want providing that care. While I have had basic CPR and First Aid training, I am not a qualified Emergency Medical Technician. I do have extensive experience driving. If I *were* a certified first responder, I would better be able to assist in this emergency situation, because this bill will allow a qualified EMT to drive alone to an accident scene. A certified first responder could then drive separately to the

scene and would then be able to drive the ambulance to the hospital while the EMT assisted the patient, enabling the patient to get qualified medical care faster, with less strain on local EMT personnel. This opens up a much larger pool of volunteers for our small, struggling EMS services, so that they can provide the best service possible to their community.

As legislators, we get to work on all size bills. Some are big and some are small. This bill will affect very few Ohioans, but for those that it will effect, it can have a big impact at the time when they may need the most help. Representative Carey and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.



State Representative John Carey
Ohio House District 87

HB 128 Sponsor Testimony
House Transportation, Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee
March 9, 2011

Chairman Combs, Ranking Member Mallory, members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for allowing Representative Peterson and me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 128.

This bill addresses two issues with Emergency Medical Services in Ohio:

1. National Accreditation standards for paramedic training programs

Last year, the state EMS board voted to mandate that all paramedic training programs in Ohio become nationally accredited by 2018. This is a costly mandate, especially for local EMS training programs in rural parts of the state. I have been working with the Department of Public Safety and the State EMS board to address this concern. The solution we reached was to revise the provisions governing the current EMS grant programs to allow those funds to help training programs across the state achieve the national accreditation standards.

The State currently administers several EMS grants that are funded through seatbelt fines. The grants are available to local agencies for training and equipment, as well as research in areas such as trauma care or injury prevention. This bill would allow for training programs seeking national accreditation to receive a grant to fund the accreditation process.

2. Ambulance Staffing

At the end of the 127th General Assembly, an amendment was included in Senate Bill 129 intended to assist rural volunteer fire departments and EMS organizations in providing services to their citizens in a more effective manner. However, during discussions with the Ohio Fire Chief's Association, I learned that some of the language from SB 129 has not fully achieved its intended purpose and needs some additional clarification.

The bill contains two basic provisions. First, in the instance where an ambulance is traveling to the scene of an accident or emergency, the ambulance would only need to be staffed by

the driver, who would be over 18 and an EMT or Paramedic. Other emergency personnel would be able to meet the ambulance at the scene, saving them critical travel time.

The second portion of the emergency run involves transporting the patient for treatment. In this instance, if the EMS organization utilizes only volunteers, or substantially utilizes volunteers, the ambulance would be staffed by at least two EMT's or paramedics, or by one first responder and one EMT or paramedic, allowing one of these individuals to be the driver. However, if there is one first responder and one EMT or paramedic, the ambulance would be driven by the first responder so that the more highly trained EMT or paramedic could monitor or treat the patient. If the EMS organization fully or substantially utilizes paid staff, then the ambulance would be staffed by two EMT's or paramedics, allowing one of them to serve as the driver.

I have discussed the provisions of this bill with several EMS agencies and fire chiefs from my district and other parts of the state. I have also worked closely with the Fire Chief's Association and the Department of Public Safety to craft the bill that is before you today. I appreciate all of their support and assistance in drafting this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 128. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.