



**Courtney Eric Combs**  
State Representative, 54th House District

---

**Sponsor Testimony before the House Local Government Committee**  
**House Bill 288 – Volunteer EMT with S.W.A.T. and civil liability**  
**Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Chairman Blair, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to give sponsor testimony before you today on House Bill 288. This legislation would permissively extend the same civil immunity currently afforded to employees of political subdivisions to tactical emergency medical technicians providing volunteer medical assistance to a SWAT team at the team's request.

House Bill 288 allows an EMT, including physicians and nurses, to carry a firearm into or on the premises commandeered by a SWAT operation during the time a technician is providing medical assistance. Specifically, this legislation would extend the civil immunity to these volunteer EMT's of the Political Subdivision Tort Liability Law as if they were employees of the political subdivisions SWAT team.

Currently, because volunteer emergency medical professionals are providing important services on a volunteer basis they are not given the same civil immunities as someone who is an employee. The Political Subdivision Tort Liability Law that covers employees says that a political subdivision, such as a police or fire department, is not liable for damages in a civil action for injury, death, or loss to person or property allegedly caused by an act in connection with a governmental function. These brave volunteers are willing to provide their medical expertise at little or no cost to the government community and I believe they deserve to be granted the same civil immunity as someone being paid full time. By extending this protection to professional volunteers, it is my hope that more tactical medical professionals will volunteer their services when asked and will therefore save money for the communities in which they operate.

This legislation would also make one exemption for tactical EMT's to possess firearms while providing assistance to a SWAT team. Currently, volunteer EMT's are considered regular civilians in regard to possessing a firearm. This bill would allow a tactical EMT volunteer to possess a firearm in a room which any person is consuming liquor or in an open air arena that has been issued a D liquor permit. This addition was included solely because SWAT operations commonly occur in these type venues.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to provide you with sponsor testimony on House Bill 288. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Capitol:**  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111  
(614) 644-6721  
(614) 719-6954 (fax)  
(800) 282-0253 (toll free)

[www.house.state.oh.us](http://www.house.state.oh.us)  
[District54@ohr.state.oh.us](mailto:District54@ohr.state.oh.us)

**District:**  
Butler County  
311 Nilles Rd., Suite F  
Fairfield, Ohio 45014  
(513) 829-8222  
(513) 829-8249 (fax)