

# THE CHRONICLE

## FOP of Ohio President’s message:

The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio and the FOP Ohio Labor Council have been closely connected since the inception of collective bargaining in the Buckeye State. That connection continues today, and the purpose of this article is to encourage every eligible member of the FOP Ohio Labor Council to join a local FOP lodge.

The FOP Ohio Labor Council is the largest police union in Ohio. It does outstanding work representing its members through collective bargaining, union representation, and legal defense. What it does not provide are the fraternal, social, and political advocacy functions—and that is where the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio excels.



**OHIO LABOR COUNCIL**

The FOP of Ohio consists of approximately 24,000 members statewide and nearly 400,000 members across the country. In Ohio, members belong to about 180 local lodges, including a statewide lodge for those who do not have a local lodge associated with their agency.

The Fraternal Order of Police was founded—and continues to operate—as a representative organization. Members have a voice and a vote in all matters within their local lodges. Through those lodges, members direct the efforts of the FOP and determine which programs and benefits best serve them. No other police association offers so much for so little. Whether through legislation, education, or fraternal support, your voice—and the voices of your fellow members—form the voice of the Fraternal Order of Police.

So what benefits are available to FOP members? While offerings vary slightly by local lodge, the National FOP provides every member with a wide range of benefits, which can be viewed here: <https://fop.net/member-benefits>

In addition, the FOP of Ohio offers benefits such as college tuition discounts, scholarships, and free line-of-duty death and accidental death/dismemberment benefits, among other



**Jay McDonald**

State FOP President

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## FOP of Ohio President's Message: (con't)

However, the primary reason to join the FOP is not simply what it can do for you—it is what you can do for your brothers and sisters in law enforcement. By joining the FOP, you help advocate for better pensions and improved (and safer) working conditions through legislation in both Congress and the Ohio Statehouse. The FOP also advocates in the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Supreme Court of the United States on issues that are critical to law enforcement officers everywhere. We work to encourage the election of pro-law enforcement leaders and stand up against unfair narratives that make our jobs more dangerous. In short, you become part of the Voice of Law Enforcement.

We are frequently asked whether corrections officers are eligible to join the Fraternal Order of Police. As with many decisions in a bottom-up organization, the answer lies with the local lodge. Many local lodges in Ohio actively recruit corrections officers, and the National FOP permits their membership. There is also a place for other important civilian members of law enforcement through FOP Associates.

There is also a place for our retirees within local FOP lodges. Retired members are offered the opportunity to purchase legal defense coverage related to carrying a firearm during retirement. The FOP also continues to advocate for the protection of their pensions. The benefits of FOP membership do not end when a member retires from their agency.

Another question we frequently receive is about the cost of membership in the FOP of Ohio. Members pay dues to their local lodge, which then forwards a portion to the State and National organizations. Of those dues, the FOP of Ohio receives \$39 per year (approximately \$3.25 per month), and the National FOP receives \$11.50 per year (approximately 96 cents per month).

We encourage every eligible member of the FOP Ohio Labor Council to join a local FOP lodge and stand alongside your brothers and sisters in

support of the protection, advocacy, and benefits offered by the largest and most influential law enforcement organization in Ohio and the United States.



If you are unsure which lodge you are eligible to join, please contact Rob Hawley at [rhawley@fopohio.org](mailto:rhawley@fopohio.org) for assistance.

Please stay safe, and I look forward to welcoming you into the Fraternal Order of Police as we continue fighting for our fellow law enforcement officers.

Fraternally,

Jay McDonald  
President, FOP of Ohio  
[jmcdonald@fopohio.org](mailto:jmcdonald@fopohio.org)

## LEGAL UPDATE

# **POLICE OFFICERS CAN BE VICTIMS OF CRIME UNDER MARSY'S LAW**



**Kay Cremeans**  
General Counsel  
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In November 2017, Ohio voters amended the Ohio Constitution to include a provision known as Marsy's Law which provides privacy protections to crime victims. It guarantees a victim to be treated with "fairness and respect for the victim's safety, dignity and privacy." Marsy's Law defines a "victim" as "a person against whom the criminal offense or delinquent act is committed or who is directly and proximately harmed by the commission of the offense or act." To implement Marsy's Law, the General Assembly enacted R.C. 2930.07, Victim Privacy Law, which requires, upon the request of a crime victim, the redaction of case documents to remove the name, address, or other identifying information of the victim, prior to public release. A "case document" is defined as including audio or video recordings of a victim of an offense of violence. Ohio's Public Records Act similarly exempts from disclosure information of a crime victim that is prohibited from release under the Victim Privacy Law.

In 2023, two (2) Columbus Police Officers joined in the pursuit of fleeing robbers who had robbed a car dealership. The suspects' vehicle stopped in the middle of an interstate highway. Two (2) men jumped out of the vehicle and ran away. A third suspect exited the vehicle and fired his gun at Officer Doe 1, hitting him five (5) times at close range. The suspect then walked directly towards Officer Doe 2, aiming his gun at him. The suspect was shot and killed by gunfire from a number of officers on the scene.

The Columbus Dispatch made a public records request to the Police Department for all body camera, dash camera and 911 calls from the shootout. While the Department released portions of the requested body camera footage, it redacted the footage to conceal the identities of the two (2) officers and ended the video before the shooting started. The Dispatch insisted that it was entitled to unredacted footage and filed an action in the Ohio

Supreme Court, seeking the requested footage including the portions where the two (2) officers were identified.

The Supreme Court conducted a thorough analysis of Marsy's Law, the Victim Privacy Law and the Public Records Act. The Dispatch argued that the definition of victim under Marsy's Law was ambiguous and that police officers performing their public duties can never be victims. The Court rejected that argument and instead found that Marsy's Law was clear and determinative with respect to police officers and that police officers are persons against whom crimes can be committed. Thus, police officers can be victims under Marsy's Law and the Victim Privacy Law.

Once the Court determined that police officers can be victims under Marsy's Law and that the suspect committed a criminal act against the officers, the Victim Privacy Law required the redaction of any identifying information of the officers. Thus, the unredacted footage of the shootout falls within Marsy's law exception to the Public Records Act. The Court found that the Department's redactions in removing any identifying information about the officers was appropriate. The Dispatch's request for unredacted footage was denied.

*State ex rel. GateHouse Media Ohio Holdings II, Inc. v. Columbus Police Dept.*, 2025-Ohio-5243. Decided November 25, 2025



Note -- Fraternal Order of Police, Capital City Lodge #9 and the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio filed amicus curiae briefs urging the denial of the Dispatch's request for unredacted footage.

## ARBITRATION NEWS



# 15-DAY SUSPENSION IS EXCESSIVE GIVEN THE PROVEN OFFENSES

The Grievant was a Dispatcher who had three (3) years of service with the City and no prior discipline. He reported to work for the night shift on Christmas night. When he arrived, he engaged in a conversation with the out-going Dispatcher about a virtual reality gaming headset. While that conversation was happening, a call came in on the business telephone line. The Grievant answered the call saying "Police Department, please hold" then put the call on hold for 96 seconds while he finished the conversation about virtual reality gaming. When he picked up the call, he discovered that the call was from a private ambulance service requesting backup and mutual aid for a cardiac arrest patient and the presence of a Police Officer. The Dispatcher questioned why an Officer was needed. The Grievant dispatched the requested medic unit and the Officer. The patient died; however, there was no evidence that the 96 second delay was the cause of the death. The private ambulance company complained about being put on hold and treated rudely. The Employer issued the Grievant a 15-day suspension for violating rules about unnecessarily putting callers on hold, neglect of duty, unsatisfactory work performance, unethical conduct, discourteous conduct and various policies pertaining to Dispatcher Responsibilities, Call Handling and Emergency Calls.

The Arbitrator examined the three (3) main elements of disciplinary cases – notice, proof and reasonableness. The Arbitrator found that the Grievant had notice of the policies. The Arbitrator also found that the Grievant violated the rules against neglect of duty and unsatisfactory performance but rejected the charges of unethical conduct and discourteous conduct. Regarding reasonableness, the Arbitrator stated that discipline is judged on the proportionality of the discipline in relation to the proven offense. The proven offenses

were neglect of duty and unsatisfactory work performance which typically lend themselves to the application of progressive discipline. The collective bargaining agreement also provides for progressive corrective action for minor offenses.

While the Arbitrator determined that the Employer failed to follow progressive discipline, the Grievant's conduct warranted more than a reprimand because it goes to the very core of the Dispatcher's duties and that the Grievant was furthering his own interests rather than the Employer's interests. While the Arbitrator addressed the fatal outcome of the medical emergency, she found that such consideration was not proper given that the Grievant's misconduct did not contribute to the death of the patient. Thus, the misconduct consisted solely of neglect of duty and unsatisfactory performance which would normally be addressed through progressive discipline.



### OUTCOME

Grievance sustained in part. The fifteen (15) day suspension is reduced to a five (5) day suspension. The Grievant is restored lost wages for the other ten (10) days.

## ARBITRATION NEWS

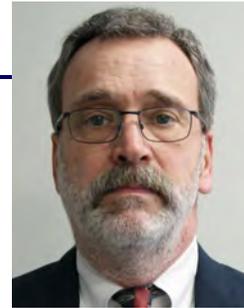
# ARBITRATOR LOOKS TO PRIOR INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION IN SUSTAINING THE GRIVANCE

Patrol Officers work 12-hour shifts with 2 days on, 2 days off, 3 days on, 2 days off. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) contained a provision which stated “Leave for male employees may be deducted from sick leave for care of the Employee’s wife and family during the postnatal period. Such sick leave shall be for a maximum of ten (10) consecutive days.” This leave has been in the CBA for the last eight (8) years; however, the current CBA increased the number of sick days from 5 to 10.

The Grievant was a male Officer. Upon the birth of his child, he requested to use 10 days of sick leave. The Grievant was advised that because he only worked 5 days in a consecutive 10-day calendar period, he could only use 5 days of sick leave and would have to use vacation or other leave if he remained off work. The Grievant used 5 days of sick leave, 5 days of vacation, and filed a grievance.



The Union argued that “10 consecutive days” were working days without including scheduled days off; that under the previous CBA, the use of 5 consecutive sick days never took into account



**Doug Behringer**  
Staff Attorney  
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scheduled days off; that the intent was to double the sick leave available for postnatal care; that increasing the sick days in the CBA from 5 to 10 is nonsensical if the outcome is the same, i.e., that Patrol Officers can only take off 5 sick days.

The Employer argued that “10 consecutive days” means calendar days, not workdays. An employee is entitled to 10 consecutive days off and can use any available sick days which fall within that consecutive 10-day calendar period.

The Arbitrator found that the contract language pertaining to “consecutive days” was imprecise. The terms “consecutive working days” and “consecutive days” were used interchangeably and inconsistently in different sections of the CBA. The Arbitrator found that the intent of the language was to provide for 10 consecutive workdays of sick leave, based upon past interpretation of the CBA. The reference to 10 days refers to sick leave days, not the entirety of the leave period.

### OUTCOME

Grievance sustained. The Employer is ordered to reinstate Grievant’s vacation and charge the days to his sick leave.



**Mike Weinman**  
Director of Governmental  
Affairs  
[MWeinman@fopohio.org](mailto:MWeinman@fopohio.org)

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:**

The General Assembly returned in February with a full complement of committee hearings and voting sessions. Governor Mike DeWine signed SB 295/Restoration of Competency. The new law extends the period of time a suspect can be restored to mental competency from one year to three. Originally, the bill was for five years, but the House changed it to three years. The Senate concurred with the change, and the bill was sent to the Governor. The bill had to be signed before the suspect in the murder of Cleveland Police Officer Josh Ritter walked out of the Central Ohio Behavioral Health Hospital - Columbus, a free man. So the bill was rushed to Washington, D.C., where the governor was attending meetings, and then returned to Columbus for Secretary of State Frank LaRose's signature. Mere hours prevented a killer from walking free.



A few of the bills that had hearings in February include:

- HB 478/Jury Tampering to create the offense of jury tampering and to include a public servant in the offense of intimidation of an attorney, victim, witness, or public servant in a criminal case
- HB 507 Prostitution to prohibit a person from receiving proceeds of prostitution
- HB 533/Criminal Law To add to the list of vehicles that can be used to commit a vehicular homicide or vehicular assault
- HB 359/Emergency Alert System to clarify the statewide emergency alert system in cases of missing autistic or developmentally disabled children, and to name the alert the Joshua Alert,
- SB 55/OVI to change the laws pertaining to operating a vehicle or watercraft while under the influence of marihuana and the admissibility of evidence for purposes of OVI statutes
- HB 252/Burglary to modify the offenses of burglary, aggravated burglary, breaking and entering, and trespass in a habitation when a person is present or likely to be present.
- HB 343/ Juvenile Justice, to require mandatory dispositions for youths adjudicated delinquent for committing acts that would be felony theft or vandalism if committed by an adult



## **STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

### **Georgette Nichols, Office Administrator, FOP/OLC , Northeast Office**



**Georgette Nichols**  
Office Administrator,  
FOP/OLC  
[GNichols@fopohio.org](mailto:GNichols@fopohio.org)

Georgette Nichols was born in Barberton and raised in Doylestown, where she has spent most of her life. A graduate of Chippewa High School, she went on to earn her Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Kent State University. She dedicated 14 years to the Kent State University Police Department as a Records Technician before bringing her experience and professionalism to the FOP/OLC team.

As the Office Administrator for the FOP/OLC’s northeast office in Akron, Georgette plays a vital role in supporting daily operations and ensuring the office runs smoothly, efficiently, and professionally. Her organizational skills and steady leadership help create an environment where both staff and members feel supported. Over the past five years, she has taken great pride in working for an organization that is deeply committed to its employees, its members, and fostering a welcoming and supportive workplace culture .

Outside of work, Georgette values time spent relaxing, recharging, and connecting with her family. She especially enjoys family activities, whether it’s Topgolf, bowling, riding four-wheelers on the weekends, or enjoying fun indoor activities at home. Spending quality time together with her family is her favorite way to unwind and appreciate life’s everyday moments.

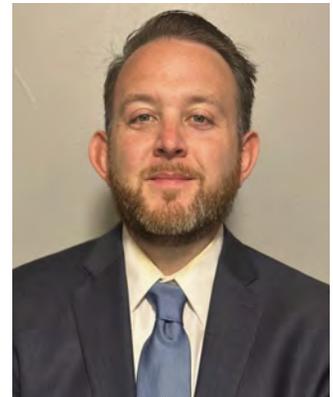
### **Tim Hassing, Part-time Field Representative**

Tim Hassing is a dedicated law enforcement officer and proven union leader with nearly a decade of service at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Police Department (“GCRTA”).

At GCRTA, Tim serves as an Accreditation Sergeant, working directly with command staff to develop and update departmental policy while managing the accreditation process for CALEA and Ohio law enforcement standards. He also leads the department’s Honor Guard, supervising members who represent the agency at funerals, civic ceremonies, and major community events. His training and certifications include Taser Instructor, Front Line Supervisor Training, Technical Crash Investigation and FTO Certification. Tim previously served as an Acting Sergeant and Field Training Officer, mentoring new officers, reviewing reports and use-of-force documentation, and helping maintain high operational standards across his shift .

As Bargaining Unit Chairman/OLC Associate at GCRTA, Tim served on the negotiating team and has represented members in grievances and disciplinary matters since 2018. As the OLC Associate, Tim worked to create a retire/rehire program for GCRTA, he created a peer-to-peer program and he worked with management to change their short-term disability and workers’ compensation procedures. Tim is committed to ensuring every member receives strong advocacy, fair treatment, and a respected voice at the table.

Tim earned a Bachelor of Applied Science in Criminal Justice from Notre Dame College. Tim is married and is the proud owner of a 1-year-old German Shepherd. In his free time, he enjoys reading, playing golf, and operating his own woodworking company.



**Tim Hassing**  
Part-time Field Representative  
[THassing@fopohio.org](mailto:THassing@fopohio.org)



***The Fraternal Order of Police/Ohio Labor Council congratulates the following recently retired members:***

Robin Ladd	Forensic Scientist	BCI & I
Tanya Noland	Deputy	Licking County Sheriff's Office
Jimmy Fitsko	Lieutenant	Marion Police Department
Jeffrey Wietrzykowski	Corrections Officer	Lucas County Sheriff's Office
Ronald Schermerhorn	Detective	Lucas County Sheriff's Office
Jamey Heffler	Senior Police Clerk	Wyoming Police Department

**We are truly proud of your accomplishments, and we were honored to represent you!**

**Godspeed and Thank You for Your Service!!!**

**Please let us know when your co-workers are about to retire so that we can recognize them.**

We need their name, agency, title, years of service, specialized units and any notable achievements.

Send this information to: Dan Ozbolt, [dozbolt@fopohio.org](mailto:dozbolt@fopohio.org).



# **UNIQUE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**

## **Officer Involved Shooting/Critical Incident & Employee Rights Training**

### **Topics**

**Immediate Steps to Protect Your Rights After Scene is Secure.**

**What to Expect in the BCI Investigative Process**

**FOP Critical Incident Response Service**

**Presentation and Q&A from an Involved Officer**

**Garrity and other Employee Rights**

### **Instructors**

**BCI Special Agent**

**FOP/OLC Staff Representative and Attorneys**

**FOP Critical Incident Response Presentation**

**Involved Officers**

**Financial Wellness (1 hr. CPT for OP&F & OPERS Officers, if your Agency Approves, CPT Class# 26CPT088)**

### **Date, Time & Location**

**Thursday, April 30, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Athens Community Center, Room A**

**701 E. State Street**

**Athens, OH 45701**

**Free lunch and beverages will be provided by the FOP/OLC**

**Please RSVP ASAP to [Dozbolt@FOPohio.org](mailto:Dozbolt@FOPohio.org)**

**Provide Name, Rank, Agency, and email address for each attendee.**



## **OHIO LABOR COUNCIL**

FOP/OLC ASSOCIATE TRAINING

### **Best Practices for Representing the Membership**

#### **Topics**

**Leadership and Your Role**

**Contract Negotiations 101**

**Electing and Supporting the Bargaining Committee**

**The Grievance and Arbitration Process**

**Employee Rights**

**Critical Incident Protocols**

#### **Instructors**

**FOP/OLC Legal and Field Staff**

#### **Date, Time & Location**

**Wednesday May 20, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.**

**Maumee Police Department-Training Room**

**109 E. Dudley Street**

**Maumee, OH 43537**

**Lunch and beverages will be provided by the FOP/OLC**

**Please RSVP asap to [Dozbolt@FOPohio.org](mailto:Dozbolt@FOPohio.org)**

**Provide Name, Rank, Agency, and email address for each attendee.**



# Negotiations Update



<u>Employer</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Other Details</u>
Rossford Police Department	2025-\$4.30 + 4% 2026-5%, 2027-5%	Section added for Black out dates and wages; added maternity/paternity day of leave; Increased court appearance hours; Vacation time is received in first year regardless of hire date and more!
City of Lakewood (G)	2026 - 6.0% , 2027—3% 2028—4%	Added Easter as a Holiday; Vacation at 19 years is now 300 hours
City of Marysville	<b>D:</b> 26– 4%; 27– 5%; 28– 3% <b>B:</b> 26– Step A 11.5%; Step B 10.3%; Step C&D \$1.50 + 4% <b>G:</b> 26– \$1.50 +4%, 27– 5%; 28-Corp:3.4%; Sgt: 3%	Sick Leave increase for those on 4/2 schedule, Increased meal allowances, \$0.40 increase in Shift differential, MOU for vacation accrual and carryover

## Springing into March

### Pass Along...



Use the QR code to access the dues card!

*Have you completed your dues card?*

*Do you need to update the information?*

The FOP/Ohio Labor Council, Inc. tries to make sure that the information that we gather is correct. If you are unsure if you have filled out a dues card, or if the information on the dues card is incorrect you can now follow the QR code and complete it electronically.

Just open your phone’s camera until you see the yellow box and then tap within the box.

If you have any questions, contact Aaron Crawford, Deputy Director. [ACrawford@fopohio.org](mailto:ACrawford@fopohio.org)

Stay Safe!





# Associate Training



Field Staff Coordinator Mark Scranton presenting on Electing and Supporting the Bargaining Committee



FOP/OLC Deputy Director Aaron Crawford presenting at the OLC Associate Training on Electing and Supporting the Bargaining Committee



FOP/OLC Executive Director Gwen Callender and Senior Staff Representative Tracy Rader presenting on Leadership and the Role of the Associate



## 2026 January Winter Board Meeting



## Promotion



FOP of Ohio Vice President TJ Assion speaking at the FOP Winter Board Meeting



FOP Assistant Chief Legal Counsel Jessica Franken presenting an update on Marsy's Law.



Staff Attorney, Doug Behringer at Brett J. Marris' promotion ceremony to Lieutenant at Piqua P.D. Pictured are Lt. Marris, Doug and Jeff Marris (retired from Piqua P.D.) Doug had represented Officer Marris when he was terminated from the P.D. in 2008.

