



Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters

Jon Harvey, President



Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio

Jay McDonald, President

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Ohio Senate

Ohio Statehouse

Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 8 – Protecting Public Safety and Effective Labor-Management Relations

Dear Senators,

On behalf of Ohio's **firefighters, paramedics, and law enforcement officers**, we write to express our strong opposition to **Senate Bill 8**, which seeks to limit **Union Release Time** for public employees. This legislation is a direct attack on the ability of first responders to engage in **collaborative problem-solving, advocate for public safety policies, and negotiate the very agreements that keep our departments running effectively.**

Union Release Time is **not a taxpayer handout**—it is a **bargained-for benefit** that has long been negotiated in collective bargaining agreements, often **funded through leave time voluntarily donated by members.** It provides a structured way for public safety professionals to address critical workplace issues **without disrupting daily operations**, ensuring that both fire and police departments function efficiently.

It is **widely supported by Fire Chiefs and Police Chiefs across Ohio** because it allows them to manage departments **more effectively**, reduce costly disputes, and create safer working conditions that benefit both first responders and the communities they serve. The ability to maintain **strong labor-management relationships** is essential to retaining highly trained professionals and ensuring **quick, efficient emergency response when Ohioans need it most.**

Beyond harming labor-management stability, S.B. 8's restrictions on "political activity" would have **dangerous unintended consequences.** As written, this bill could **prohibit firefighters and police officers from supporting local levies** that fund **fire stations, emergency equipment, and personnel hiring**—resources that are crucial to keeping Ohio's communities safe.

For decades, Ohio's first responders have worked in good faith with local governments to develop fair, responsible agreements that serve both workers and taxpayers. Senate Bill 8 **undermines that trust and threatens the efficiency and safety of our fire and police departments.**

We urge you to **reject Senate Bill 8** and stand with the first responders who risk their lives every day to protect the people of Ohio. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jon Harvey

President, Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters

Jay McDonald

President, Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio