



Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

House Judiciary Committee

Shawn Welch

Interested Party Testimony on Substitute House Bill 343

February 25, 2026

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Synenberg and members of the House Judiciary Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to submit interested party testimony for Substitute House Bill 343 on behalf of the Ohio Judicial Conference. I am Shawn Welch, Deputy Legislative Counsel for the Ohio Judicial Conference.

We thank the sponsor, Representative Lorenz, for providing a copy of the pending substitute bill, L_136_0687-4, being discussed in today's hearing. Substitute H.B. 343 will expand the offense of breaking and entering to include vehicle break-ins and increase penalties for criminal damaging or endangering, including new penalty thresholds based on the financial impact of the damaging. The OJC, which represents a co-equal branch of government, believes that expanding offenses and increasing penalty levels is a policy decision best left to the legislature.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony on Sub. H.B. 343. Please let me know if you have any questions.