



Senator Scott Oelslager
29th Ohio Senate District

GUEST COLUMN

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Looking Out for Those on Patrol

By State Senator Scott Oelslager

Lawmakers at every level of government confront a variety of issues that affect the daily lives of our citizens. However, no issue is of greater importance than that of ensuring the safety of those who live in our communities. In order to fulfill the forefathers' vision of a "pursuit of happiness" for one and all, it is vital that our society works to provide security for our friends and neighbors.

With that thought in mind, the Senate recently took action on legislation that will establish a Blue Alert system throughout Ohio. Under the provisions found in Senate Bill 258, a 'blue alert' would use existing broadcast systems to notify the public in the case of a police officer being killed or injured while on duty. The alert would provide details regarding a suspect's appearance and any other available information, such as a description of his or her vehicle.

Throughout Ohio, the well-being of so many is preserved by the devotion and service of so few selfless peace officers. Not only would this bill offer them greater protection while on duty, but it would also act as a vital tool in deterring some instances of violent crime. In knowing that we are watching, potential offenders would think twice before harming a man or woman in uniform. Violence and ill-will toward fellow residents should never be tolerated and enactment of this legislation would reaffirm the responsibilities that we all hold as citizens.

Thirteen states across the country have already enacted similar measures, and Ohio is on the brink of implementing its own Blue Alert system. Prior to receiving unanimous, bipartisan support from Senate members, the bill garnered the endorsement of Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine. The legislation is now being heard before the Ohio House of Representatives.

Senate Bill 258 is a common sense proposal centered on the health and safety of our communities. A bill such as this one knows neither political party nor special interest. Quite simply, it has decent, everyday citizens in mind. It is my sincere hope that House members take quick action on the legislation and that a Blue Alert system is soon established in Ohio.

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Senator Oelslager represents Ohio's 29th District which contains a portion of Stark County. He serves as Chairman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.