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**Joint Sunset Review Committee Testimony  
Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association  
May 21, 2024**

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Hillyer, and members of the Joint Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written remarks on the Volunteer Firefighters' Dependents Fund (VFFDF) boards.

As you are aware, Ohio Revised Code Chapter 146 requires the creation local boards, whose members are elected by both the local legislative authority as well as by members of the fire department. While these boards are rarely used, we support the ongoing maintenance of these bodies:

1. **The boards do not provide a time burden.** The ORC requires the boards to meet annually, and in most situations, these meetings are accomplished in less than an hour. More work is required in the unlikely and tragic event of a firefighter line of duty death or disabling injury, but luckily most departments will never need to face this.
2. **The boards function at little to no cost to taxpayers.** The vast majority of board functions are accomplished at no cost to taxpayers utilizing the services of volunteers.
3. **The boards provide local control.** In the unlikely event of a firefighter line or duty death or disabling injury, these boards allow for local input and determination into the facts of the case and provide a critical link to the family(ies) of the injured or fallen firefighter.
4. **The boards streamline operations.** Due to their local affiliation, board members are actively involved in the VFFDF claim process and benefit distribution. This allows for a streamlined, reliable resource for the state when disbursing funds.

Additionally, by having to elect members annually, these boards serve as a reminder to local legislative authorities and fire departments about the hazards that volunteer firefighters face on a regular basis.

For these reasons, the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association respectfully requests that the VFFDF boards, both public and private, not be sunset.

Sincerely,

**Chief Colin Altman, Retired**  
*President*