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**Rep. Yuko Introduces Bill to Increase Penalty for Fleeing Police**  
*Legislation will increase punishment from misdemeanor to felony*

**COLUMBUS** – State Representative Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights) today announced he has introduced a bill that would increase the penalty for fleeing or eluding a police officer in a motor vehicle from a first-degree misdemeanor to a fifth-degree felony.

“People need to know that if they run from the cops, they are going to pay,” Rep. Yuko said. “Maybe once the price for fleeing is a felony, criminals will think twice about trying to get away.”

Existing Ohio law stipulates that a person in a motor vehicle who tries to escape an officer could receive up to 6 months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Yuko’s legislation stiffens the penalties, allowing for a 6-to-12 month jail sentence and fines up to \$2,500. The bill also makes fleeing police without the use of a motor vehicle punishable as a misdemeanor.

This proposal comes on the heels of several incidents in which police officers and/or bystanders were injured during a chase. Cleveland Police Officers Aric Pruitt and Robert Ellis were wounded when their cruiser crashed into the vehicle of Namir Spratt while chasing a fleeing subject. Pruitt is still recovering from head injuries at Metro Hospital. Ellis suffered a fractured pelvis and a knee injury, which required surgery. Spratt endured a punctured liver and spleen.

In a separate incident, Virginia DiGiorgio was hit and killed by a 13-year-old suspect who had stolen a car and was attempting to elude police. DiGiorgio was on her way to see “The Lion King” with her husband when the tragedy happened.

“The officers’ injuries and Ms. DiGiorgio’s tragic death were absolutely senseless and should never have happened,” Rep. Yuko said. “This has got to stop, and I’m going to do my part in putting an end to it.”

Rep. Yuko’s legislation is awaiting assignment to a House legislative committee. Co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle have signed on in support of this bill.