



## *News from the Ohio Turnpike*

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**For Immediate Release:**

### **Anniversary of Trooper's death serves as reminder to slow down, move over**

*May 15 is also National Peace Officers Memorial Day and next week is National Police Week*

**BEREA** (May 12, 2017) – The date of May 15, 2000 is forever etched in the memories of the surviving family members of Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) Trooper Robert Perez, Jr.

Trooper Perez died three days after his cruiser was struck from behind by a minivan while he was writing a citation on the Ohio Turnpike in Erie County near the US 250 exit.

According to the OSHP, the suspect was high on amphetamines and struck the back of Trooper Perez's vehicle on May 12, 2000 at a speed of 83 miles per hour. Trooper Perez was 24 years old and was born on Aug. 15, 1975 in Lorain where he was a lifelong resident.

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission and the Ohio State Highway Patrol are asking motorists to help keep their fellow drivers and law enforcement officers safe by following Ohio's Move Over law. From 2012-2016, OSHP cruisers were involved in 73 crashes that appear be related to the move over law, according to the Patrol. These crashes resulted in the deaths of two civilians, 24 injured officers and 32 injured civilians.

"By moving over, motorists are helping to protect the lives of everyone who works on or uses our roadways," said Lt. Richard Reeder of the OSHP's Milan Post. "It's not just the law—it's the right thing to do to prevent the type of tragedy that befell the Perez family."

"Our top priority is the safety of our customers, law enforcement personnel, employees and contractors," said Randy Cole, Executive Director of the Ohio Turnpike. "We need everyone's cooperation to have a safe season by slowing down and moving over for all roadside workers."

The Commission and Highway Patrol also recall the tragic death of Ohio Turnpike Assistant Foreman John Fletcher, 53, in 2012. He was struck and killed by a truck driver who also injured two other turnpike employees in a turnpike work zone west of the SR 53 exit near Fremont.

"If you slow down to 50 MPH in a 1/2-mile zone, it adds only 10 seconds to your trip," added Cole. "In a 7-mile zone, it will add about 2 ½ minutes to your drive. That's a very minor inconvenience when you factor in the possible deadly consequences."

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In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15 as National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week in which May 15 falls, as National Police Week. Established by a joint resolution of Congress in 1962, National Police Week pays special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the lined of duty for the safety and protection of others.

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