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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Bowers: Independent Investigation Process for Critical Force Incidents Will Increase Accountability & Reaffirm Public Trust

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The House Committee on Military Affairs and Public Safety today approved HB 2650, bipartisan legislation sponsored by House Speaker Rusty Bowers which creates a new division within the Arizona Department of Public Service (DPS) to independently investigate critical force incidents by peace officers across the state.

“The current divide in America over the state of policing has been polarizing,” said Speaker Bowers. “What each side shares in common is the desire for increased accountability and reaffirming public trust in law enforcement agencies that are charged with safeguarding our communities and people. HB 2650 is result of nearly a year of thoughtful formulation by law enforcement leaders throughout Arizona and it presents the best solution for establishing an independent review process for officer-involved shootings.”

In April 2021, conversations began between Speaker Bowers and law enforcement partners from across the state with the goal to identify a unified solution to address officer-involved shootings. Those conversations and meetings have culminated in the introduction of HB 2650.

HB 2650 would establish new guidelines for investigating critical force incidents across the state. Agencies would be required to either have a neighboring agency, regional task force, or the newly created DPS division investigate force incidents, which would provide a uniform model of transparency and accountability statewide.

Speaker Bowers anticipates amendments, from both sides of the aisle, will be proposed during the legislative process as his colleagues consider this important bipartisan legislation.

HB 2650 is cosponsored by Representatives Ben Toma (R-22), Kevin Payne (R-21), Jennifer Longdon (D-24), César Chávez (D-29). It will next be considered by the full House.

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