

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO
TENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

State of Ohio,	:	
Plaintiff-Appellee,	:	
v.	:	No. 25AP-889 (M.C. No. 2025 TRD 120179)
Ronald E. Hedges, Jr.,	:	(REGULAR CALENDAR)
Defendant-Appellant.	:	

D E C I S I O N

Rendered on September 29, 2026

On brief: *Zachary M. Klein*, City Attorney, *Melanie R. Tobias-Hunter*, and *Dave Pelletier*, for appellee.

On brief: *Conrad / Wood*, and *Scott P. Wood*, for appellant.

APPEAL from the Franklin County Municipal Court

DORRIAN, J.

{¶ 1} Defendant-appellant, Ronald E. Hedges, Jr., appeals the judgment of the Franklin County Municipal Court finding him guilty for violating a traffic ordinance following a bench trial. For the following reasons, we affirm.

I. Facts and Procedural History

{¶ 2} Following a collision on I-270 between the vehicle appellant was driving and another vehicle, appellant was cited for violating Columbus City Code (“C.C.C.”) 2131.08(a)(1), changing lanes without safety.

{¶ 3} At a bench trial held on August 13, 2025, plaintiff-appellee, State of Ohio, presented the testimony of the driver of the other vehicle involved in the collision. The driver of the other vehicle testified that he was driving around the speed limit in the right-hand lane of the three-lane highway when he moved into the center lane to overtake a semi-

truck. Upon moving into the center lane, he accelerated slightly, then saw appellant's vehicle signal and rapidly move into the center lane from the left-hand lane. He (or his vehicle's emergency braking system) applied the brakes, but he was not able to avoid a collision. A dash cam video from this vehicle was also presented during the testimony.

{¶ 4} Appellant testified that he was also traveling around the speed limit. He looked in his side mirror prior to moving from the left lane to the center lane. He testified that he saw the center lane to be clear and, farther back in the right lane, the truck with which he collided. Appellant testified that he learned from the video that the accident occurred when he moved into the center lane but, at the time, appellant did not know what happened.

{¶ 5} On August 27, 2025, the trial court found appellant guilty. On October 6, 2025, the trial court imposed a sentence consisting of a \$75 fine plus court costs.

II. Assignment of Error

{¶ 6} Appellant appeals and assigns the following sole assignment of error for our review:

APPELLANT'S CONVICTION FOR CHANGING TRAFFIC
LANES WITHOUT SAFETY WAS AGAINST THE MANIFEST
WEIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE.

III. Discussion

{¶ 7} A manifest weight claim "attacks the credibility of the evidence presented and questions whether the state met its burden of persuasion." *State v. Harris*, 2026-Ohio-2492, ¶ 10 (10th Dist.), citing *State v. Richey*, 2018-Ohio-3498, ¶ 50 (10th Dist.), citing *Eastley v. Volkman*, 2012-Ohio-2179, ¶ 11-13; see also *State v. Reillo*, 2026-Ohio-2701, ¶ 25 (reaffirming the manifest weight standard as it was explained in *Eastley* at ¶ 12). In conducting a manifest weight review, a court "weighs the evidence and all reasonable inferences, considers the credibility of witnesses and determines whether in resolving conflicts in the evidence, the jury clearly lost its way and created such a manifest miscarriage of justice that the conviction must be reversed and a new trial ordered." (Cleaned up.) *Reillo* at ¶ 26. " 'In weighing the evidence, the court of appeals must always be mindful of the presumption in favor of the finder of fact.' " *Id.* at ¶ 28, quoting *Eastley* at ¶ 21. " 'If the evidence is susceptible of more than one construction, the reviewing court is bound to give it that interpretation which is consistent with the verdict and judgment,

most favorable to sustaining the verdict and judgment.” ’ ’ ” *In re Z.C.*, 2023-Ohio-4703, ¶ 14, quoting *Seasons Coal Co., Inc. v. Cleveland*, 10 Ohio St.3d 77, 80, fn. 3 (1984), quoting 5 Ohio Jur.3d, Appellate Review, § 603, at 191-92 (1978).

{¶ 8} C.C.C. 2131.08(a)(1) states that, on any roadway with two or more clearly marked traffic lanes in which the traffic is moving in the same direction, “[a] vehicle shall be driven, as nearly as is practicable, entirely within a single lane or line of traffic and shall not be moved from such lane or line until the driver has first ascertained that such movement can be made with safety.”

{¶ 9} Appellant argues that his version of events—that he checked his mirrors and determined that he could safely change lanes—should establish that he met his obligation under C.C.C. 2131.08(a)(1), and that it was the other driver’s acceleration that caused the collision.

{¶ 10} As the trier of fact in the bench trial, the trial court “is best able to view the witnesses and observe their demeanor, gestures and voice inflections, and use these observations in weighing the credibility of the proffered testimony.” (Cleaned up.) *Reillo* at ¶ 28. On the facts of this case, we do not find that the factfinder clearly lost its way and created such a manifest miscarriage of justice that the conviction must be reversed and a new trial ordered. The evidence demonstrated that, although appellant had checked his mirrors, when he moved into the center lane, it was not safe to do.

{¶ 11} Therefore, we overrule the sole assignment of error.

IV. Conclusion

{¶ 12} For the foregoing reasons, appellant’s sole assignment of error is overruled, and the judgment of the Franklin County Municipal Court is affirmed.

Judgment affirmed.

BEATTY BLUNT and LELAND, JJ., concur.
