



Kristin Boggs

State Representative
18th House District

Thank you Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, and ranking member Celebrezze for the opportunity to testify today.

The abduction and killing of Reagan Tokes brought to light multiple cracks in Ohio's criminal justice system. You heard from my joint sponsor, Rep. Hughes, on the importance of being able to give violent and dangerous felons indefinite sentences. While this is an extremely important component of our legislation, we know that the majority of felons, even those with indefinite sentences, will eventually be released back into society. In recognizing this fact, the Reagan Tokes Act also looks to create proactive and necessary reforms for felons recently released from prison.

First, it provides the ODRC must develop a plan within twenty-four months to establish a reentry system for felons that are rejected from the private reentry programs. Currently Ohio contracts with several private companies that assist parolees in the transition from prison to society. These companies provide parolees housing, work force development, and a supportive environment to enhance their continued rehabilitation. These companies do good work, but they will not work with felons that are considered too violent or dangerous for their programs. Consequently, the most violent and dangerous felons, the ones that should have the strictest oversight and strongest guardrails, are released back into society at large. In the case of Reagan Tokes, the man who abducted and killed her was released homeless.

Continuing to release our most violent and dangerous felons back into society homeless because we don't know what else to do with them is simply unacceptable. Two years is adequate time for the ODRC to determine the best course of action, and begin executing their plan to ensure that appropriate security measures and housing is available for these parolees that cannot be placed with private reentry companies because of their violent criminal conduct.

Secondly, it requires the ODRC to create standards for parole officer caseload sizes. We have significantly less parole officers today than we did ten years ago. Unfortunately, we do not have less people on parole. Our parole and probation officers are the only proactive law enforcement we have—their goal is to prevent crime, not react to crime. My mother used to say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We cannot measure how many times a probation officer prevents a crime from occurring, thereby saving unknown victims and countless state resources. We can, however, measure whether our probation staffing size, working hours, and resources are on par with national standards and with other states. Requiring the ODRC to set forth these standards will foster transparency and provide a true reflection of our parole system.

Lastly, the Reagan Tokes Act provides necessary guidelines for using GPS monitors. It does this by creating four key provisions:

1. Every GPS monitor will have an inclusionary restriction associated with it. An inclusionary zone is a home address, or a work address, that lets the monitor know where the parolee is supposed to be during certain hours. If the parolee is not at the address, the monitor will be notified. Placing inclusionary zones on GPS monitors is necessary because it is the only way the monitor will have any context to know if the person is where they are supposed to be.
2. It requires the ODRC to create a database accessible to law enforcement officers that will provide: a) all of the parolees with GPS monitors, b) the parolee's restrictions, c) the name of the parole officer, and d) the name of the monitoring company.
3. It requires GPS monitoring companies to provide law enforcement officers GPS information upon request, without a subpoena.
4. It requires GPS monitoring companies to have crime correlation software. This technology allows a law enforcement officer to provide the GPS monitor a location and date of criminal incident, and it will show if any parolee on a GPS monitor was at that location at that time.

The policies set forth by the Reagan Tokes Act are a genuine attempt to codify some common-sense measures—developing a reentry framework so our most violent felons aren't released from prison homeless, adopting standards for parole officer workloads, allowing law enforcement officers to access GPS data without a subpoena, are concepts that most people assume are already happening. It is our hope that this bill, named in recognition of Reagan Tokes, not only addresses the immediate necessary reforms, but also serves as the foundation to build an ongoing conversation about best policies to enhance the safety and security of communities.