



April 10, 2018

Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

The Justice Action Network, the largest bipartisan organization working to make our justice system more effective in Ohio and across the country, strongly supports Senate Bill 66 and urges swift passage by your Committee.

If passed, this legislation will help ensure that accountability and targeted interventions are available and leveraged in each individual case, strengthening public safety and saving taxpayer dollars as a result.

The legislation strengthens the use of community-based programming by allowing more varied and tailored community control sanctions. These proven interventions can stop the cycle of crime, but must be individually targeted to each offender to address his or her risks of recidivism. Senate Bill 66 also works to expand eligibility for critically-needed drug and alcohol treatment programs for individuals suffering from a substance abuse issue. This bill removes some of the unnecessary exclusions for these programs so offenders can receive treatment and intervention as quickly as possible, therefore improving their chances at a successful reentry.

The purpose of the criminal justice system should be to rehabilitate people to become productive, law-abiding citizens. According to a recent Justice Action Network Poll, over 87% of Ohio voters agree.

Further, Senate Bill 66 works to expand access to record sealing by increasing the non-violent, low-level felony offenses eligible for sealing. Importantly, when a record is sealed in Ohio, law enforcement and criminal justice agencies retain access to information about a person's criminal history, but it is sealed from distribution to the general public. According to our poll, 78% of Ohio voters believe individuals with low-level criminal histories should be allowed to seal their records so they have a better shot of finding jobs and supporting their families.

Senate Bill 66 will continue the work done by the Ohio Legislature in recent years to make Ohio's correctional system more effective and more cost-efficient, just as states across the country including Texas, Utah, and South Carolina have improved their systems, cut crime and recidivism, and eased the burden on taxpayers. We thank you for your consideration, and urge a vote in favor of Senate Bill 66.

Holly Harris, Executive Director

Justice Action Network