



Representative Emilia Strong Sykes
34th Ohio House District

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chairman Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 411.

From 2014 -2017, fourteen Ohio residents were released from prison for a crime that they did not commit. Their wrongful conviction took days, months and years away from their families and loved ones. Furthermore, ripping people from the ability to earn a living, raise their families, and participate in society even for a moment hinders their ability to be productive citizens. Their wrongful conviction deprived them of freedoms that you and I get to experience and enjoy every day. Since 1989, 62 wrongful convictions in Ohio have been overturned and exonerated. Those convictions included 20-year sentences, life sentences, and death sentences.

House Bill 411 is important because it streamlines the process for wrongful convictions. A wrongful conviction even if only a minute is spent in prison deserves

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compensation because it is due to the negligence of the State of Ohio. As a state we are charged with protecting our citizens and that also means protecting the rights of the accused. This legislation will not only allow compensation for wrongfully convicted felonies but misdemeanors as well. As Representative Seitz said, a similar bill was originally created in 2003 with Rep. Seitz and my mother, Barbara Sykes. I am committed to continuing this effort to make sure those who are wrongfully convicted receive the compensation and justice they deserve.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify on House Bill 411, Rep. Seitz and I will be happy to take questions.

