



BUCKEYE STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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ROBERT A. CORNWELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Honorable Scott Oelslager
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

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Dear Mr. Chairman,

My name is Bob Cornwell and I am the Executive Director of the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association. I come before you today to offer a different perspective on the T-Cap program as initiated by DRC.

I would like to offer additional insight from what Director Mohr has reported to the committee last week. There are 8 counties involved, Clinton, Medina, Ross and a multi-county facility commonly referred to as CCNO. CCNO is jointly controlled by Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Lucas and Williams Counties. As you can tell there are 4 jails but 8 counties involved in this Pilot Program. I have had an opportunity, within the past three weeks, to discuss the progress of the program with either the Sheriff of the county or the Jail Administrator of the facility. I believe it has been related to this Committee that the status of the pilots is all well and good. That is not what I have been told. The pilots have only been in existence for just over 7 months. The projected number of offenders that were to be kept at the county level for a 12 month period has either been met or is about to be met in less than the 12 month time-line. I believe this has occurred because the base years used to project the number of offenders was prior to the opioid epidemic. Also, the MOU that was signed at the local level to reimburse the county for offenders incarcerated at the county jail was too low. I felt it was necessary to give the committee a better feel from the county's perspective rather than what Columbus is saying.

The Ohio House passed Sub. HB 49 which included a VERY KEY provision as far as sheriffs are concerned. That provision is the per diem reimbursement from the grant monies made available to the county to implement this program. County jails are maximum security facilities because the sheriffs house a variety of

prisoners, both accused and sentenced, DUI, robbers, rapists, sex offenders and murderers. For this reason the costs to operate a county jail is different than a state operated facility. DRC is trying to supplant their overcrowding problem downward. Downward means the county level. The per diem rate is established by the sheriff based on cost analysis of expenditures to operate the county jail, (only the jail, not any other part of the sheriff's office). While the per diem rate is based on the costs and the number of prisoners housed, the reimbursement from the grant would ONLY be based on those that meet the grant description of eligible offenders, i.e. first time offender, non-violent, and non-sex offenses.

If changes are made by the Senate, I implore you to retain the per diem portion of the House version. If this grant program is to be successful, all parties to the MOU must be working together and on the same page. The per diem requirement ensures the other parties are held accountable to the agreement. The per diem provision accomplishes this by removing the motivation for judges to simply "send them to jail". Sending offenders to jail will be the most expensive option because the monies would be deducted from the grant. The same is true if the judges send offenders to DRC. The per diem rate makes all accountable for sending offenders to jail or the prison.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions I will try to answer them

Respectfully,


Robert A. Cornwell
Executive Director