



# DAVE YOST

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 21, 2019

Chairman George Lang  
House Criminal Justice Committee  
77 South High St, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Lang,

I write to you today to offer my support for House Bill 85, which would allow counties to apply for state funds in order to prosecute certain capital cases.

Currently, counties with small budgets have no safety net if a capital crime takes place within their borders. Investigation, prosecution, and indigent defense can drain a county's budget, leaving them with little to provide necessary services to properly administer justice. The Extreme Capitol Case Funding Bill would create that safety net, allowing the county to apply for funding in capital cases that involve multiple victims or defendants, and have an estimated trial cost exceeding five percent of the county's budget at the time the charges are brought.

The bill provides oversight of this process by requiring the Attorney General's Office and the State Public Defender's Office to jointly submit a request to the Controlling Board for approval of the funds out of the Emergency Purposes Fund. Currently the legislation carries an appropriation which is an estimate of the costs currently facing Pike County. As you know, capital cases come with high costs and are lengthy in duration.

I do not need to repeat for you the tragic case of the Rhoden family in Pike County. However I believe it is necessary to keep the family in our minds as we discuss this bill. We seek justice for the Rhoden family and others like them, and justice should not depend on what you can pay. The kind of case we are dealing with in this matter is a once in a decade, possibly even a generation, type of case. It is my sincere hope that once this needed funding mechanism is put into place, the State of Ohio will never have to use it to seek justice for those who were taken from us too soon.

I commend Representative Wilkin and Representative Rogers for their careful stewardship on this important and timely issue. I would be happy to discuss this bill with you and members of your committee at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Yost".

Dave Yost  
Ohio Attorney General