



Testimony in support of House Bill 1

June 13, 2019

Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Leland, and Members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Legislative Liaison for Americans for Prosperity – Ohio. Americans for Prosperity is the state’s largest grassroots organization focused on long-term solutions to country’s biggest problems. On behalf my organization, and thousands of activists here in the Buckeye State, **I urge you to support House Bill 1**, which will help make Ohio’s criminal justice system more proportionate and facilitate the re-entry of former offenders who have earned a second chance.

H.B. 1 will give Ohioans who can benefit more from treatment than from a prison sentence the opportunity to address low-level crimes related to substance abuse through court-ordered intervention rather than a conviction. Additionally, the legislation will give more people who have earned a second chance a better shot at reaching their full potential by offering additional opportunities to seal criminal records.

People should rightfully be held accountable for crimes they commit. However, if criminal activity is related to a defendant’s drug or alcohol use, the best way to protect public safety can often be to address the underlying substance abuse that helped drive the crime, not its symptoms alone with a prison sentence. H.B. 1 still gives courts ultimate discretion over whether a defendant should qualify for an intervention or not, and does not allow interventions for more serious, violent, and sexual crimes. By supporting non-prison solutions that still protect public safety, H.B. 1 will help Ohio move in the smartest direction on mitigating the impacts of substance abuse.

House Bill 1 also expands opportunities for Ohioans with criminal records who have earned a second chance to move on from their pasts and reach their full potential. The bill will allow more people to apply to have their records sealed after completing their sentences and making it through a waiting period. Ohioans who have served their time and paid their debt to society for past mistakes should not lack recourse to avoid being permanently penalized in housing, education, and employment. H.B. 1 will provide this to more of our citizens who prove themselves capable of successfully rejoining their communities.

Supporting substance abuse treatment and giving prisoners who have earned them better opportunities at a second chance are smart-on-crime, soft-on-taxpayer approaches to reforming our justice system. For these reasons, **I urge you to support House Bill 1**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

Jeff Dillon
Legislative Liaison
Americans for Prosperity—Ohio