

Good afternoon Chairman Lang, Vice-Chair Plummer and members of the Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Lisa Defendiefer. I am here today to speak in support of the House Bill 215.

I am the Deputy Director of Operations and Advocacy for Capital Crossroads and Discovery Special Improvement Districts. Capital Crossroads and Discovery Special Improvement Districts are both located in downtown Columbus and together represent an 80-square block area. Private property owners in this geographic area assess themselves nearly \$2 million annually for supplemental safety, cleaning and homeless outreach services. Over 20 special improvement districts or SIDs exist throughout the state in communities many of you represent. Property owners in Columbus make this investment to help create and maintain a neighborhood in which people want to work, live and play much like property owners in communities you serve in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton and Akron do.

I have had the privilege of working for Capital Crossroads and Discovery SID for over 18 years alongside 30 uniformed ambassadors including homeless outreach specialists who provide direct line services to the general public in the public realm. We collaborate regularly with social service providers, law enforcement officers, municipal court representatives and private security officials to ensure we are providing a holistic response to real or potential criminal activity. We have had success. However, we realize that there are numerous issues with the current criminal justice system that need to be addressed. House bill 215, if adopted, will address some system shortfalls including but not limited to required reentry programs for violent offenders, maximum workload and caseload standards for its parole and field officers, GPS monitoring for offenders released from prison, and better information sharing among law enforcement across jurisdictions. I am here today to offer some insight into why I support House Bill 215 especially as it relates to the need for reentry programs and proactive GPS monitoring.

In our work downtown, we recognized that many offenders released from prison often are released to the streets. Our state's rehabilitation and corrections system currently provides inadequate or non-existent reentry programs to violent offenders transitioning back to our communities and, as I understand, little or no proactive GPS monitoring. As a result, the offenders and our communities are set up for failure.

- One failure happened on February 19, 2016 downtown when Billy Dee Anderson, a man released just two days before came into Chase Bank downtown (just about two blocks from here) and managed to get an unsuspecting female bank employee to escort him to a remote safety deposit box area. He then proceeded to repeatedly sexually assault and choke her. He is now serving 40 years in prison after pleading guilty to three counts of rape and one count of kidnapping. The victim survived but will live the rest of her life scarred mentally and physically. If Anderson had been better monitored and reported to the half-way house where he was directed to go perhaps the incident at Chase Tower never would have happened.

The downtown property owners invest a great deal of money in services downtown to ensure security issues are addressed. There is growing concern related to the volume of people on the street, especially individuals who have been released from prison with little or no options.

- SID ambassadors encounter at least two individuals per month on the street who are experiencing homelessness who have just been released from prison.
- Staff at the Open Shelter, a social service provider in the downtown that assists homeless or people at-risk of being homeless, indicate that an average of two men per day come to The Open Shelter for assistance who were just released from prison.
- Of the registered sex offenders reportedly living in the downtown, approximately 30% are staying at Faith Mission's Grant Avenue shelter, 55% are reportedly living on the street on park benches, on private property, in parking garages and other locations and the remaining 15% are in some type of housing. Thirty-eight percent of the sex offenders reportedly living on the street downtown have been convicted of rape.

Outside of the sex offenders convicted with rape, I cannot say with certainty that every inmate released from prison to the streets has a violent criminal history but I do know that some like Billy Dee Anderson do and that those individuals need the most structure, support and supervision upon release. Otherwise, more violent crimes will continue to take place. The Reagan Tokes Act, if passed, will greatly help address our system failures and help keep the general public safer through required reentry programs, proactive GPS monitoring, improved communications across law enforcement jurisdictions and reasonable workloads for parole officers.

I wish to thank Representatives Boggs and Carfagna for sponsoring the bill and say how pleased I am to see that House Bill 215 has bi-partisan support.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. I am available to answer any questions.