

Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee

February 13, 2020

Written Testimony

House Bill 299

Good morning Chairman Lang, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Minority Leland, and other esteemed members of the House Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to share our written proponent testimony today.

My name is Timothy Roberts, Director of Governmental Affairs for the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association. (OCSEA) represents approximately 9,000 adult and juvenile correctional staff in Ohio's prisons and juvenile centers. I'm offering this testimony today because we support Representative Greenspan's legislation (HB299) to help protect Ohio Correction Officers by enhancing the penalties for certain crimes committed against them inside and outside of Ohio's adult and juvenile correctional facilities.

Correction Officers who work, or who have worked in a correctional setting can tell you that, on many occasions, inmates have threatened to cause physical harm to them and their family. These threats range from assault, rape and murder. We must recognize that inmates in our correctional facilities, once released, reside in the same cities and neighborhoods in which our correctional staff reside.

Today, anyone with a smartphone, computer or tablet can get immediate access to a correctional employee's personal and private information. The truth is this, targeted assaults on correction employees or their family members do occur. Unfortunately, there are no readily available statistics on how frequently these assaults happen.

We understand Correction Officers are often in high-risk situations. This, we know, comes with the profession. However, Correction Officers and their families deserve to feel safe, whether at home or out in public.

This is why, again, we want to thank Representative Greenspan for this bill and support any language that helps protect our members who are working to protect the citizens of Ohio.

Thank you, Chairman Lang and the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee, for your time and consideration.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

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