May 29, 2019

Honorable John Eklund, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Eklund,

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Bob Cornwell and I am the Executive Director of the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association. We have had an opportunity to review Senate Bill 3 as Introduced and are very concerned with its potential impact on local county jails and county budgets.

Converting non-violent 4th and 5th degree felonies to unclassified misdemeanors may and will deal a significant blow to an already overcrowded county jail system. Most county jails are ill equipped to deal with the overwhelming increase in drug related cases specifically females being housed at the local level. County jails are saturated with pre-trial detainees unable to meet bond or bail requirements. Using county jails as a sentencing alternative rather than DRC is a very expensive proposition as compared to the State facilities.

Many counties are transporting inmates to adjacent county jails or other county jails as far as 70 to 80 miles for a one way trip. The costs absorbed by the county for transportation, overtime, vehicle replacement and stress on employees is taking its toll on county budgets.

Alternative programs are just that, an alternative. Sentenced inmates that opted for treatment in lieu of incarceration have had some success but ultimately they return to the county jail for violating the terms and conditions of the drug treatment program or under new charges. We have seen this occur much too often.
We laud your attempt to somehow reduce the stigma of "CONVICTED FELON". To provide an opportunity for a new start but treatment programs are expensive and MUST last for 18 to 24 months at a minimum if they are to be successful. County jails are more expensive.

I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Robert A. Cornwell
Executive Director