

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THE WITNESS INFORMATION FORM BEFORE TESTIFYING

DATE: April 16, 2015

NAME: Sheriff Mark Wasylyshyn

ORGANIZATION: Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association
(IF APPLICABLE)

POSITION/TITLE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ARE YOU REPRESENTING: YOURSELF _____ ORGANIZATION

DO YOU WISH TO TESTIFY ON
LEGISLATION (BILL NUMBER): 69
SPECIFIC ISSUE: _____
SUBJECT MATTER: _____

DO YOU FAVOR _____ OR OPPOSE THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION REGARDING THIS ISSUE?

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE GROUNDS ON WHICH YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE SUCH ENACTMENT:

Privatization of Jails

WILL YOU HAVE A WRITTEN STATEMENT, VISUAL AIDS, OR OTHER MATERIAL TO DISTRIBUTE?
YES ___ No ___

(IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES TO THE CHAIRMAN OR SECRETARY)

HOW MUCH TIME WILL YOUR TESTIMONY REQUIRE? 10 minutes

As the elected Sheriff, I am directly accountable to the citizens of Wood County on the operations of the jail. I pride myself in the efficient and effective manner I run my office including the jail. I have a fiduciary jail administrator who reports to me and serves at my pleasure. She understands that her job depends on a clean, safe, healthy jail that is run as inexpensively as possible. Our kitchen's director is also fiduciary and she is constantly looking into ways to save money. For example: we have had a jail garden for the past six years saving us over \$5000.00 per year. Our per meal cost, including labor is about \$1.30!

I agree there are functions that are better done by the private sector than by government. Some of the most important responsibilities of government are best done by government. Would we ever privatize the duties and responsibilities of ODOT? Some of my concerns about privatizing jails are:

Who is ultimately going to be responsible for the operations of the jail? What happens when something goes wrong? Who will the judge call when the inmate was not at court on time because the jail staff didn't have him ready on time? Perhaps the commissioners since they signed the contract. Will the county be liable for deaths and injuries? When a loved one is concerned or has questions about the jail, who do they call? Where does the buck stop?

Most county jails are in the county seat, most all county seats in Ohio are in cities. The enforcement of laws in our county complex like our health department, jobs and family services etc. are done by the City of Bowling Green Police department. A private corporation is not going to be able to investigate and file charges on crimes that occur in the jail from people bringing contraband into the facility, fights, assaults, thefts, sexual assaults etc. One could conclude the city police departments would have to police and investigate crimes in the private jail. Today my jail deputies file the charges. My detectives do the investigations if needed.

The Sheriffs are still going to be responsible to transport inmates to and from court. To and from prisons and extraditions. My transport deputies also work in the jail. This allows us to utilize staff throughout the office. When inmates go to the hospital we use the jail deputies to guard them and sometimes the

road patrol deputies. Will the private company be able to guard inmates off site? Will they be armed?

In many respects I run my office like a business. I am always questioning every expenditure to see if I really need an item in the budget, can I get it for less, can I put the purchase off for another year? Unfortunately, we cannot always run jails for profit as there are many requirements that have to be met regardless of cost. We have had inmates who have needed expensive surgeries due to prior conditions.

As I analyze the thought of privatization of jails, the only way I can see someone make a profit, off of others being incarcerated, would be to cut labor costs. We cannot cut staff levels as BAD dictates our inmate to deputy ratios. They could cut the pay and benefits. Do we want employees making minimum wages with minimal benefits dealing with our constituents who are at their worst times of their lives? I don't think so! We have so many inmates with addictions, mental health issues, and going through detox. The skill level and interpersonal relations are very important. They come with a price. Turn over of employees is very expensive. Unions are savy enough to successfully argue that even though they may not be called deputies, if they are doing the same job they will get the same pay and benefits.

Please do not take the voice of the people away from someone to works directly for the citizens! There is a reason Sheriffs in Ohio have been running jails since we came into existance in 1788!