TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL K. MURRY

Chairman Butler, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Johnson & Members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of House Bill 427. As the judge of Xenia Municipal Court, I frequently see college-aged offenders from the four colleges and universities within this court's jurisdiction: Antioch College, Cedarville University, Central State University and Wilberforce University. I deal with young people who have gone away to college and have made a mistake which has landed the young person in XMC.

These offenders often end up on probation here. At sentencing, I encourage them to do everything asked by their probation officers so they can successfully complete probation, then allow one year to pass so application can be made to have the record sealed. I find great pleasure when that young person has completed probation and has his/her record sealed so the criminal offense will not haunt the person when he/she applies for a job after graduation.

Except, sometimes the sealing of the record does no good. As the law stands right now, the court only sends notice of the sealing to a limited number of agencies – not to the myriad agencies that collect court conviction information for private purposes. It is not uncommon for me to get letters from graduates who have lost a job – or who could not rent an apartment – because the criminal record (which I have ordered sealed), still shows up in a background check through these various private agencies.

I support your efforts in seeking a solution to this problem. If sealing of a record is to mean something, ALL RECORDS of that conviction must be sealed.