



OHIO JUSTICE & POLICY CENTER

RECLAIMING LIVES • RENEWING COMMUNITIES • RESTORING JUSTICE

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To: Criminal Justice Committee, Ohio House of Representatives

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From: Stephen JohnsonGrove, Senior Staff Attorney

Date: 7 March 2017

Re: In Support of H.B. 6

I am writing to ask for your favorable consideration and vote for House Bill 6 because we at the Ohio Justice & Policy Center know how much Ohioans deserve the relief it provides. HB 6 would choke off a form of legalized extortion the preys on anyone arrested for a crime — regardless of whether they were ever convicted.

We know this issue well because the Ohio Justice & Policy Center (OJPC) is the foremost expert in this state on the multitude of legal barriers facing Ohioans with criminal records. A large part of our experience is rooted in our twelve years of providing free legal clinics, several times each month, to people with criminal records in greater Cincinnati. We have served over 6,000 Ohioans through these clinics. Also, our office built and maintains the most powerful state-law tool in the country for cataloguing criminal-record-based legal barriers: The Ohio Civil Impacts of Criminal Convictions Database (<http://CIVICOhio.org>). We provide community- and professional-education sessions statewide on these topics.

Rep. Barnes's goal of targeting mugshots newspapers and websites is a laudable one. As you may have seen these "newspapers" in gas station convenience stores or seen these websites in banner ads across the internet. Their business model is to republish mugshots they have automatically scraped from local sheriffs websites, using exaggerated and salacious headlines to label the people in the pictures. They may list the original charge(s) someone was accused of, and never bother to update that information if the charges are dismissed or lowered. They then charge hundreds of dollars to anyone who wants to have their picture removed. Along with regular advertising, it appears these removal fees are a major source of income for these websites and papers.

HB 6 should only target these types of disreputable media outlets. So long as the language of the bill does not place restrictions on clerks of courts, this should be passed as quickly as possible to stop this grossly unfair practice in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions (sjohnsongrove@ohiojpc.org).