



OHIO COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ASSOCIATION  
TESTIMONY

HB 49

SUBMITTED TO THE  
OHIO SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE

ON

FINANCE: GENERAL GOVERNMENT & AGENCY REVIEW

By: Mike Randle  
May 23, 2017

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Government & Agency Review:

I am Mike Randle, President-Elect of the Ohio Community Corrections Association (OCCA). OCCA represents 39 nonprofit residential reentry treatment facilities, also called halfway houses, and community based correctional facilities (CBCFs). There are 18 CBCFs in Ohio, OCCA represents 5.

I am also Vice-President of Correctional Programs in Summit County for Oriana House, a Chemical Dependency and Community Corrections Agency with over 35 years of experience in this area. Oriana House currently operates programs in Akron, Cleveland, Fremont, Marietta, Sandusky and Tiffin.

As you can see by the enclosed fact sheet, Ohio Community Correctional Programs; including Halfway Houses, CBCFs, and Community Corrections Act Programs provide effective treatment sanctions while assuring for accountability and public safety. Through an efficient allocation of taxpayer resources based on sound evidence-based practices, Ohio has made significant steps forward to reduce costs and improve public safety.

Our member agencies provide residential and non-residential services to criminal justice involved individuals. This includes persons reentering local communities from incarcerated settings or sanctioned in the community in lieu of prison. Our clients are much more likely to have mental illness or substance use disorders than the general population. In fact, according to the Brennan Report (widely cited by Director Gary Mohr) "...79% of today's prisoners suffer from either drug addiction or mental illness, and 40% suffer from both."<sup>1</sup> In Ohio, the result is a prison system with ten times as many mentally ill inmates as there are patients in the six psychiatric hospitals in our state.

Our research-based programs address behavioral health issues and are **proven** to reduce recidivism. Clients are able to work and/or attend school while participating in treatment, gathering resources and learning skills for successful reentry. The attached letters and statements from past and current clients attest to some of the treatment and programming they receive.

This budget expands Ohio's capacity to provide services to individuals statewide, including rural areas struggling with the opiate addiction epidemic. I hope that my testimony today on House Bill 49: budget provisions from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) provide some insight on how we can make improvements in our state.

#### TARGETED COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES TO PRISON (TCAP)

Our agencies treat generations of adult family members with mental illness and substance use disorders who have criminal justice involvement. Many of them come to us as a step down from prison. "Unfortunately, we know that drug addicted Ohioans trapped by the opioid epidemic do

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<sup>1</sup> Brennan Center for Justice, "How Many Americans Are Unnecessarily Incarcerated?"  
<https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/how-many-americans-are-unnecessarily-incarcerated>

not think rationally, and their addictions are not adequately addressed by sending them to prison.<sup>2</sup> Prison diversion is a much more effective approach for working with this group and other low level offenders.

The Brennan Center for Justice, the Ohio Chamber, the Right on Crime conservative think tank, the Council of State Governments and the Buckeye Institute have all asserted in separate reports that prison costs are not worth the outcomes. In addition, Ohio's progressive approach is supported nationwide: A Pew Research Poll shows that voters across the U.S. are overwhelmingly in favor of strengthening community corrections programs (attached).

OCCA enthusiastically supports allowing local jurisdictions the ability to choose approaches that work best for them in keeping the lowest level felons in their communities. The Ohio House understood the far reaching positive implications that this new policy will have on their constituencies when they passed T-CAP. This new framework will address the myriad (treatment) needs that prison does not provide.

OCCA would like to correct the record of past testimony presented before this committee. The 15% deviation cap provisions for TCAP preserve judicial discretion by allowing multiple fifth degree felons to go to prison! The deviation allowance can be used in any way that a county sees fit without compromising the spirit and integrity of the TCAP program. OCCA respectfully requests that the Senate maintain the spirit and integrity of Director Mohr's proposal by restoring the version of T-CAP that allows for a 15% deviation cap **without** a waiver for sheriffs who may opt to send offenders to prison.

The waiver amendment ultimately allows jail administrators to second guess judges in sentencing persons to prison, effectively rendering T-CAP moot. Specifically it...

- *allows the common pleas court to send "an offender sentenced to a prison term of 12 months or less for an F5 to DRC...instead of in local confinement" if they are above 110% of the jail's desired capacity and the county has exhausted their deviation cap*
- says that those who operate a local confinement facility can notify the judge if the desired capacity would be exceeded and that the judge **must** either modify the sentence and send the person to another facility, impose a community control sanction **or** order the release of another inmate
- provides that if the judge fails to act, **within 24 hours**, the facility may release another inmate who has served at least 90% of their sentence
- permits the sheriff to delegate this duty to other jail personnel
- *allows counties to forfeit their TCAP monies in favor of sending their inmates to ODRC for confinement*

#### PROBATION IMPROVEMENT AND INCENTIVE GRANTS (PIIG)

As members of the Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections, OCCA supports a continuum of community control sanctions including probation and parole supervision,

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<sup>2</sup> ODRC memo of February 28, 2017 from Gary Mohr to Paul Pfeifer, Executive Director Ohio Judicial Conference

residential services and detention. PIIG is a source of funding dedicated to probation services that already **allows for collaborative efforts with residential providers in current law**. The Ohio House added language allowing CBCFs to apply for those funds directly. OCCA respectfully requests returning to the as introduced version preserving those monies for support of our non-residential partners.

## MEDICAID

**Medicaid expansion is especially critical now. We are making progress in turning the tide on the opiate crisis that has ravaged our local communities with 3,050 deaths in 2015 and a record peak still expected.** This is a chronic condition that requires diligence and tenacity as we know that addiction can be a long road without quick fixes. Any reductions could impact our clients' ability to access health care and chemical dependency treatment services.

In the version of Medicaid eligibility requirements for the expansion group that requires a work requirement, OCCA asserts that this will inadvertently increase public safety concerns for communities with mentally ill clients and/or addicted job seekers that either were not assessed in an incarcerated setting and/or are awaiting placement in treatment programs. While 57% of Ohio's expansion population was unemployed, 75% of those were actively seeking work according to the Ohio Medicaid Assessment<sup>3</sup>.

To recap, we urge passage of the TCAP language with the deviation cap and no additional waivers, continued investment in Medicaid and removal of the language adding CBCFs as direct applicants for the Probation Improvement and Incentive Grants.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer questions. Additional questions may be directed to:

Kelly O'Reilly  
Lobbyist, Governmental Policy Group  
(614)461-9335

Lusanne Green  
Executive Director, OCCA  
(614)378-9808

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<sup>3</sup> Ohio Department of Medicaid, "Ohio Group VIII Assessment"  
<http://medicaid.ohio.gov/portals/0/resources/reports/annual/group-viii-assessment.pdf>

# Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Funded Community Corrections

<u>Fiscal Years 2012-2017 ODRC Total Budget Appropriations</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	<u>FY 2017</u>
	\$1.57 billion	\$1.56 billion	\$1.60 billion	\$1.62 billion	\$1.69 billion	\$1.77 billion
<u>Residential Community</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	<u>FY 2017</u>
Halfway Houses	\$43.6 million	\$43.6 million	\$48.0 million	\$51.2 million	\$58.5 million	\$69.4 million
Community-Based Correctional Facilities	\$62.7 million	\$62.5 million	\$65.2 million	\$69.4 million	\$75.0 million	\$78.5 million
<u>Nonresidential Community</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2015</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>	<u>FY 2017</u>
Jail Diversion Programs	\$12.4 million	\$12.4 million	\$12.8 million	\$12.8 million	\$14.3 million	\$14.3 million
Prison Diversion Programs	\$27.4 million	\$28.3 million	\$34.1 million	\$34.3 million	\$46.9 million	\$41.4 million
Adult Parole Authority (supervision costs)	\$50.1 million	\$51.4 million	\$53.8 million	\$58.3 million	\$58.5 million	\$63.0 million

## FISCAL YEAR 2016 ANNUAL PROGRAM INFORMATION AND COSTS

<u>Residential</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Offenders</u>	<u>State Funded Cost per Day</u>	<u>Avg Length of Stay</u>	<u>State Funded Cost per Offender</u>
Prisons (all offenders)	27	50,819 (avg.)	\$72.23	854 days	\$61,684
Prisons (Felony Levels 3,4,5)*	27	16,791 (1/1/16)	\$72.23	558 days	\$40,304
Halfway Houses	11	8,827	\$65.29	86 days	\$6,627
Community-Based Correctional Facilities	18	7,409	\$85.07	119 days	\$10,123
<u>Nonresidential</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Offenders</u>	<u>State Funded Cost per Day</u>	<u>Avg Length of Stay</u>	<u>State Funded Cost per Offender</u>
Jail Diversion Programs	120	22,341	\$3.82	168 days	\$643
Prison Diversion Programs	68	12,012	\$12.48	312 days	\$3,895
Adult Parole Authority Regions	6	35,439 (avg.)	\$2.21	830 days	\$1,838

## FISCAL YEAR 2016 COMMUNITY CORRECTION PROGRAM BENEFITS

<u>Residential</u>	<u>Court Costs/Fines</u>	<u>Restitution</u>	<u>Child Support</u>	<u>Income Earned</u>	<u>Taxes Paid **</u>	<u>Community Work Service</u>	<u>Est. Value of CWS</u>
Halfway Houses	\$24,991	\$48,034	\$89,707	\$5,418,615	\$541,862	51,815 hrs	\$1,143,039
Community-Based Correctional Facilities	\$203,363	\$9,028	\$35,360	\$1,459,142	\$145,914	241,205 hrs	\$5,320,982
<u>Nonresidential</u>							
Jail Diversion Programs	\$2,143,425	\$669,021	\$541,070	\$36,137,147	\$3,613,715	136,385 hrs	\$3,008,653
Prison Diversion Programs	\$1,830,983	\$1,203,096	\$722,472	\$28,580,264	\$2,858,026	146,428 hrs	\$3,230,202
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,202,762</b>	<b>\$1,929,179</b>	<b>\$1,388,609</b>	<b>\$71,595,168</b>	<b>\$7,159,517</b>	<b>575,833 hrs</b>	<b>\$12,702,876***</b>

\* 89% of offenders in community correction programs are felony levels 3, 4 and 5 or misdemeanors.

\*\* Taxes paid based on 10% tax bracket \*\*\* Estimated based on Independent Sector's valuation of volunteer time for Ohio 2015 Data

## Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Funded Community Corrections

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### Residential

**Prisons** - The Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) is responsible for housing and the supervision of felony offenders sentenced by various Courts of Common Pleas. Currently, DRC operates 27 institutions of which two (2) are privately managed that house over 50,000 inmates. Four institutions house female inmates – the Ohio Reformatory for Women, the Franklin Pre-Release Center, a camp at the Trumbull Correctional Institution and the Northeast Pre-Release Center. The Corrections Medical Center serves as a medical hospital for both genders. The Oakwood Correctional Facility houses both male and female inmates in need of intensive psychiatric treatment. The remaining institutions house male inmates of varying security levels. Ohio's first "supermax" prison, the Ohio State Penitentiary, opened in Youngstown in April 1998. Ohio also has Intensive Program Prisons for both male and female offenders, which missions include education, alcohol, and substance abuse treatment.

**Halfway Houses** - Halfway houses are community residential programs providing supervision and treatment services for offenders released from state prisons, referred by Courts of Common Pleas, or sanctioned because of a violation of conditions of supervision. Halfway houses are a vital component of Ohio's community justice continuum providing services such as drug and alcohol treatment, electronic monitoring, job placement, educational programs, and specialized programs for sex offenders and mentally ill offenders.

**Community Based Corrections Facilities** - Community Based Correctional Facilities (CBCFs) are residential programs that provide comprehensive programming for offenders on felony probation. CBCFs provide a wide range of programming addressing offender needs such as chemical dependency, education, employment, and family relationships. The intensity of programming in CBCFs significantly impacts their cost per day, but results in high successful completion rates and positive impacts on recidivism. A Facility Governing Board is responsible for administrative oversight of the facility and program.

### Nonresidential

**Ohio Community Correction Act (CCA)** jail and prison diversion programs are partnerships between the State of Ohio and Local Community Correction Planning Boards. These programs provide a vital component in the overall continuum of sanctions available to courts to divert offenders and defendants from prisons and jails. Services provided by CCA Programs include: basic probation supervision, intensive probation supervision, pretrial services, day reporting, electronic monitoring/house arrest, work release, domestic violence programs and community service. These programs provide courts with the information necessary to determine the most appropriate placements and services for offenders, and then enforce the conditions set by the court to affect positive behavioral change.

**CCA Jail Diversion Programs** provide supervision and services at the pretrial stage, and misdemeanor probation stage. The programs also provide for eligible defendants/offenders to be supervised in the community while awaiting trial or sentencing, freeing up costly jail beds. Defendants/Offenders who demonstrate the ability to be safely supervised in the community are much more likely to be placed on community control if convicted. As a result, defendants/offenders are not only diverted from jail but prison diversions are also positively impacted.

**CCA Prison Diversion Programs** allow local courts nonresidential sanctions for offenders in the community at the pre-sentence stage, sentencing stage, as stand-alone sanctions, and upon release from CBCFs, Halfway Houses and Judicial Release from prison, saving scarce prison beds for violent offenders.

**Adult Parole Authority** – The Adult Parole Authority (APA) is responsible for the release and supervision of adult felony inmates returning to local communities from prison, as well as assisting Courts of Common Pleas with sentencing and supervision duties for felony offenders. It is comprised of the Parole Board and Field Services. The APA was created in 1965 and is responsible for the duties addressed in Chapter 5149 of the Ohio Revised Code.

## Public Opinion on Sentencing and Corrections Policy in America

2012 polling, consistent with 2010 research, indicates that voters are concerned first and foremost with keeping communities and people safe. Without question, voters want a strong public safety system where criminals are held accountable and there are consequences for illegal activities. They also believe that these goals can be reached while reducing the size and cost of the prison system.

A national public opinion survey conducted in January 2012, along with similar surveys in Georgia, Missouri, and Oregon, found those attitudes persist and revealed opinions on specific policy solutions.

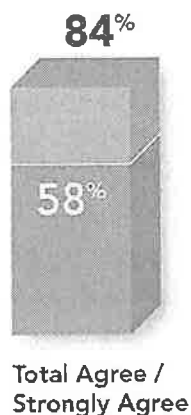
### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. American voters believe too many people are in prison and the nation spends too much on imprisonment.
2. Voters overwhelmingly support a variety of policy changes that shift non-violent offenders from prison to more effective, less expensive alternatives.
3. Support for sentencing and corrections reforms (including reduced prison terms) is strong across political parties, regions, age, gender, and racial/ethnic groups.

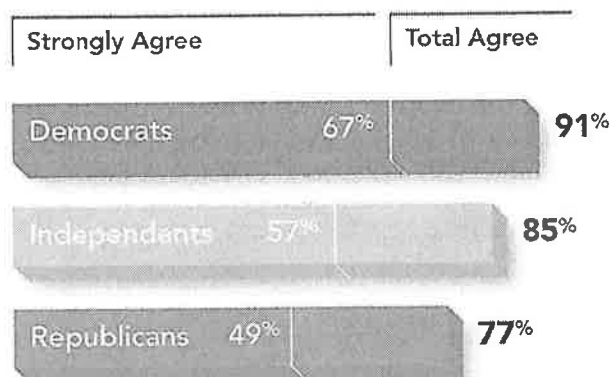
### THE BOTTOM LINE...

"Some of the money that we are spending on locking up low-risk, non-violent inmates should be shifted to strengthening community corrections programs like probation and parole."

#### Overall



#### By Party Identification



#### By Region



## Remarks delivered by Bob Strausbaugh at the Ribbon Cutting for the Alvis Pages Treatment and Recovery Center, May 10, 2017.

Good morning - How's everybody doing?

My name is Bob Strausbaugh and I've been a drug addict since I was fifteen years old. When I was twenty years old, my drug addiction caused me to commit a crime that put me in prison. I spent 32 years in prison because of my addiction.

I like to think that I was rescued and they saved my life, and I only wish that there were better programs in the prison system to deal with addiction. Like the programs Alvis has.

Upon my release from prison 16 months ago, my parole officer, Mr. Yorkovich, put me into the Alvis Recovery Choices program on Bryden Road.

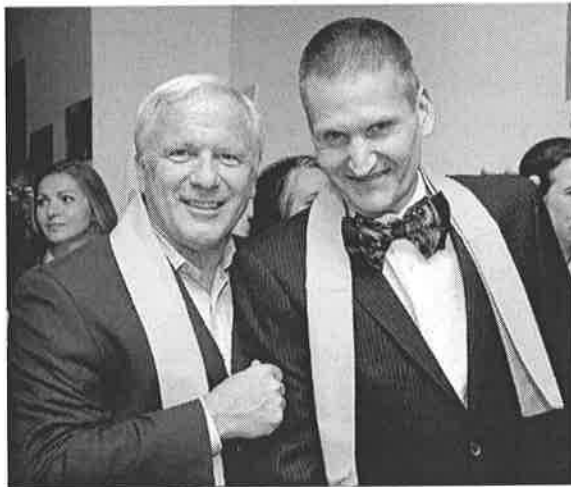
In that program, for the first time, I was shown and told what addiction was and the affect it has on a person, their family and their friends. I learned about triggers - the people, places and things that can make a person go back to using. I also learned how to identify triggers and how to react to triggers. Alvis gave me everything I needed to combat my addiction.

Once I was in the program, then it was up to me to sink or swim. Well, sixteen months later I'm still swimming.

Let me get back to the Alvis Recovery Choices team - those are the people who are moving into this facility. Where I am today is all because of Alvis and the Recovery Choices team. They helped me with my addiction and they helped me get into transitional housing and to get a job.

I was referred to a place called Fresh Start, which is run by Mr. Bryant. I can't say enough how transitional housing was what I needed coming out of prison. It's called transitional because it does what it says - helps ease your transition back into society.

Susan, who is in charge of the Recovery Choices Program, went above and beyond again when I went to her and told her I needed a job. She got on the phone, talked to a friend of hers and



*Bob Strausbaugh (r) is currently a manager at Donatos. He graduated from the Alvis Recovery Choices program in Jan. 2016. He is pictures here with Tom Krouse, CEO of Donatos. They both sang in the "50 Faces of Alvis" choir at Alvis' Evening of Light event in April 2017.*



gave him my number. Two days later, I got a call from the general manager of the Donatos on Thurman Avenue, calling to tell me to come in and start working.

Eight months later I'm a manager. I love it there and they love me.

Donatos is a company that believes in second chances and they gave me a chance to prove myself. My general manager Sean Hess is a real teacher. He's taught me all I know about the pizza business.

My two year goal is to buy my first house by the time I'm 59. My goal is to buy - hopefully by paying back taxes - a boarded up house on the south side and then rehab it myself. Then me, my job and my home will all be the result of someone providing a second chance.

Second chances provided by those who looked beyond my past and who were able to see my potential have been the key to my newfound success in life. Without organizations like Alvis and Donatos and without people like Mr. Yorkovich, Susan, Mr. Bryant and Sean, I wouldn't be here today.

And I'm here today as a living, breathing example of what the people who will be coming to this facility for treatment can look forward to - if they commit to swimming.

James Stansberry  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Harbor Light Resident

To Whom It May Concern:

I was sent to Harbor Light as a condition of my parole, and as being someone over 30 years in "The System", I was not happy about it. I believed I was being sent somewhere, once again, to be warehoused and fed. I was not looking forward to yet another so called "Program" where I'd be required to attend some classes and sessions where someone reads from a book and dutifully takes attendance.

In a short couple of weeks I began to see that I was wrong about this place. Substance abuse sessions books and guides were used, but mainly to only open up discussion and interaction. At times the meetings would run over the scheduled times, but most residents didn't care, and the facilitators would often stay to talk to small groups who would elect to stay offering advice and support. Job Readiness classes were ran the same way. Not Just "Wear a tie to every job Interview", but why it was important to make a good first impression. I could list numerous examples of the facilitators going above and beyond what was required of them, but in a nutshell they cared, they really want to help, they want you to succeed. It shows, they show it, and it truly makes a difference.

I have a great case manager. And in all my years of having case managers, I have never said that. And its not only my assigned case manager, but many case managers here who offer encouragement, suggestions, and a willingness to help with problems that case managers I've had in the past would deem unimportant and not worth much of their time and effort. I see how the staff here are overworked, their phones are constantly ringing, their offices never empty, but they will still not turn you away or try to brush you off. They put in long hours and even come in on their off days, and we see that. It shows us they want to help, that they will help and that being here is not just a pay check to them. Even the ones who I'm not assigned to have went out of their way for me on numerous occasions.

I've been employed at the Downtown Cleveland Hilton for three months now, a job I like and that has many benefits. I have clothes to wear, I have decent food to eat, I have a warm dry and secure place to live, and most important I have hope. I see now that I can really succeed, that I can do better everyday, and that I have people here who really, truly want to see me do that. I wouldn't have none of this if I hadn't came to Harbor Light. I'd be in a cheap rented room somewhere, probably in a bad neighborhood, and probably drinking everyday as I looked at my bleak and dead end future. Harbor Light has shown me a brighter future, a future I can have and a future they will help me get to. Am I a great Success? No, but I'm working on it and know I can be. Do I still have problems? Yes, but I know they can be dealt with and gotten past. I have people here who truly want me to make it, they support me, they advise me, they correct me, and they care. I wish I had been sent here years ago, and I hope may others get the opportunity to come here.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I could say even more. Harbor Light has given me real hope, something I haven't had in a long, long time.

Sincerely,  
James Stansberry

To whom it may concern:

Hello, my name is Michael Oran and I am here because of Probation conditions. I participate in everyday activities that I can. I work in my journals, talk during class when asked and try to help my fellow brother whenever possible!

Being here has helped be realize that there is a better life out there waiting for me. And because of coming here to Harbor Light has showed and taught me how to go have it. I have also learned that if I always do what I always have did, I 'll get what I always got or maybe worse. Maybe next time I want be so lucky to have a chance to come back to treatment. But there is not next time, that's not an option! I will be returning to my job upon my release June 14<sup>th</sup> 2017. Empire Windows, Siding and Roofing. I do also have family and a support group waiting for me as well. As for the staff members and counselors here, there is so many great things I have to say. But to sum it up, the best way I can put it on paper is , We are more than just clients and counselors, "We are family".

And I would like to give special attention to my counselors, Mr. Walker and Mr. Adams for saving my life. Being there for me anytime I needed them. And most of all knowing they still are there for me even when I finish the program. I made a new family here at Harbor Light Forever.....

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael Oran.

5-17-17

To whom it may concern:

During my stay at Harbor Light, the TC program has been very supportive and helpful with my transition back into society. They've helped me find a job through Employment Readiness class which is a great tool and stepping stone to help find work and help me get on my feet.

The TC program has also helped me get back on regular terms with my family. After doing prison time, being able to talk and get visits and visit my family more often is an huge support and confidence booster. I'm very family oriented, so being in a program that cares about family as much as me makes my stay here much easier.

Being locked up for 2 years and stepping into a city like Cleveland is challenging, but more so on someone like me who's from here. For the TC program at Harbor Light to help me get out early, apply for school, get a job, and reconnect with my family helped me more than I can explain. I'm thankful to be accepted into this Program and Facility.

Sincerely,

Mykal Shinault

Dear Ohio Legislators:

My name is Duane Pierson. I entered Harbor Light Complex on March 10, 2017 on Transitional Control. The job readiness classes is very helpful for someone whose reentering the community looking for a job and needs help with the interviewing process. Recently I 've started my GED classes and it's a blessing to be back in school putting myself in a better position. Being at Harbor Light, I have the chance to see my family on a regular basis. In prison it is a hour drive for my parents and I didn't see them as much so this is better for the both of us. The staff inside the complex introduced me to a program called Towards Employment. Which in my eyes has been the best program training I have ever done. From the help with making resumes to the mock interviews and just grooming us for a job in the near future. Towards Employment has opened so many doors and I got my OSHA from I class I took a month ago.

In closing I want to thank Harbor Light because without the help I've had I wouldn't be in this position doing things on my own.

Duane Pierson

"Letter To Ohio Legislators" @ Gholston

To whom it may concern, I am writing in reference to my chance of getting a second chance through my probation. By attending "CATS" treatment center.

My name is Clarice Gholston I am 35 yrs of age and I have been through alot of treatment centers some I completed. Or some I chose to leave due to me not feeling comfortable or me just feeling like they were not giving me the tools of relapse prevention that I think I needed.

Due to my P.D + Judge giving me a chance to attend treatment instead of jail time I am very appreciative. When I couldn't definitely gotten jail time, they looked deeper into the problem and decided to send me to "CATS", where I've met some of the most genuine and caring staff, counselors, and other peers.

I've noticed that one thing

that is different about this treatment is they bring out the honesty & want to the ladies here that need it & want it. It's all different situations I run across as far as reasons why ladies are here. Due to anonymity one thing I can't do is discuss individual problems. I can say drug usage is not the only issue that needs to be treated.

Here you can find physc., gambling, grief, employment training, cleaning, criminal conduct classes and that's just to name a few. Doctor, Dentist, Birth Cert. Social Sec. Card also.

You find females from jail, probation, home, streets if you want the help & are sincere you can get it. After Care, Sober Living, just to name a couple of things you can receive when you finish phase #1 of your journey. There is also a Outpatient Center for Treatment that they have and you can receive additional

Treatment: its through the same agency.

The longer I am here, the more I realize my attitude about Treatment. That even without the probation being the reason I was sent here. Doc had to play a role also because I am still here. I want to be here never in a million years have I ever thought I wanted to actually be in a Treatment Center. More than the past circumstance and failures in my life I can feel success. My family sees it and the staff here always take time out to tell you good job or is ready to listen and that means a lot to a person who really doesn't like to let her guard down. For that I will truly be grateful.

Appreciately Sincere,  
C. Whelton



To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Elizabeth Parsons,  
I am a 34 year old mother of  
2. And I am struggling with  
addiction. In 2016 I was charged  
with a Felony 2<sup>nd</sup> which could've  
gotten me prison time. However, Thankfully  
I was sentenced to drug rehabilitation.  
I came to ~~community treatment~~ C.A.T.S.  
Community Assessment and Treatment Services  
Which was the best decision that  
could've been made. It deals with  
Behavior Modification, Cognitive Self  
change, Changing Attitudes & Beliefs along  
with coping skills as well.

My family relationships have been  
mended due to this program. I have had  
no contact with my 9 year old daughter.  
Through the dedicated staff instilling in me  
the skills I now use in everyday life.  
I now have a developing relationship  
with her. The staff at community  
Assessment and Treatment Services (C.A.T.S.)  
are dedicated and hardworking.

They go so much more than above and beyond. They deeply care for us. If not for treatment many people would not have the opportunity to come and get to know themselves, and get the help they deserve and need.

Respectfully Yours,  
Elizabeth J. Pons

Gricel Pagan

May 17, 2017

Dear Ohio Legislators,

My name is Gricel Pagan. I have been sentenced to C.A.T.S. from Cuyahoga County Jail. In the past, I also was sentenced to Matt Talbot. Both treatment centers have helped me each step of the way to recovery, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity and privilege to participate in these programs.

Here at Community Assessment and Treatment Services we participate in groups such as Thinking for a Change, Straight Ahead, Parenting, Relapse Prevention, Anger Management, Communication, Criminal Conduct and Recovery Awareness. These groups are very important for me in my recovery. They are essential tools that I will learn from while I'm here and continue to use throughout my recovery. These courses have taught me how to think before reacting or making impulse decisions. Here, I've learned different ways to deal with stress, anger and anxiety. I've learned many new coping skills and am learning more everyday.

This program is helping me reconnect with my family. Since I have younger

ARC

help with an assignment, if you need someone to talk to or even if you need a clearer explanation concerning something you may not understand. They treat us like real people; not like animals and not the way we were treated in jail. In the County jail I felt like I was less than an animal. I felt like I was less than dirt sometimes... Jail is the opposite of recovery.

I'm grateful that this program and others like it are available to addicts like me in place of jail. Here we can learn something. Here I've learned so much already. This program is the reason I'm still alive today and this program is why I choose to stay sober. I hope many many more people are as privileged as I was to have been sent here. Being in jail gives you time to think - yes. But all we think about in there during our stay is how and where we will use as soon as we're free again. At least here I was able to use tools that were offered to me to help me think of how not to use and where I want to take my recovery instead. My time here at C.A.T.S. has changed my outlook on life. Thank God

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