



# Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

November 19, 2020  
Proponent Testimony on HB 215

Chair Representative Lang and Members of the House Committee on Criminal Justice,

HB 215 represents the second phase of legislation responding to deficiencies in the criminal justice system that led to the abduction and murder of Ohioan Reagan Tokes. The first phase of legislation, SB 201, was enacted in the last General Assembly. It contained significant, and at times complicated, changes to sentencing serious offenses. For context, that bill ran 435 pages, amended 57 existing O.R.C. sections, and enacted 5 entirely new O.R.C. sections. In fact, the Ohio Judicial Conference has maintained since the bill's introduction that SB 201 needed clarification and better definitions in order to be implemented properly and uniformly across the state.

HB 215, introduced in this General Assembly, is focused on post-incarceration re-entry and supervision, and the Ohio Judicial Conference does not have a comment on that aspect of the bill. HB 215 also contains the clarifications and definitions we have asked for in regards to the first phase of Reagan Tokes legislation. The Ohio Judicial Conference has worked cooperatively with the bill sponsors (as well as the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitations and Corrections) to craft the amendments specific to clarifying 132 SB 201.

The SB 201 corrections in HB 215 are important to Ohio's judiciary and it is crucial that the corrections come as soon as possible. Ohio common pleas court judges sentence nearly 20,000 offenders every year and as long as poorly-defined and confusing provisions like those in 132 SB 201 remain the law, the opportunity for unintended errors in sentencing will continue. We are submitting this testimony as proponents and encourage passage of these provisions as soon as possible.

Thank you for considering the input of the Ohio Judicial Conference. If you have any questions, please feel to contact us.

Sincerely,

Paul Pfeifer  
Executive Director, Ohio Judicial Conference