



OHIO COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ASSOCIATION
TESTIMONY

HB 166

SUBMITTED TO THE
OHIO SENATE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND
AGENCY REVIEW

By: Mike Randle
2019

Chairman Schuring, Vice-Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Finance Sub-Committee on General Government and Agency Review:

I am Mike Randle, President of the Ohio Community Corrections Association (OCCA) representing 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.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the state budget. We applaud the administration's commitment to community corrections recognizing the important role played in reducing both recidivism and the prison population.

Because of your leadership and that of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, Ohio has been a national leader in evidence based community corrections. As you can see by the enclosed fact sheet, Ohio Community Correctional Programs; including Halfway Houses, Community Based Correctional Facilities (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 restore citizens by teaching: pro-social approaches to problems, job skills, and assumption of responsibility for harm caused to communities as a result of criminal choices. As you may know, 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 "...79% of today's prisoners suffer from either drug addiction or mental illness, and 40% suffer from both¹." 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.

This budget expands Ohio's capacity to provide services to individuals statewide, including rural areas struggling with the addiction epidemic. I hope that my

testimony today on House Bill 166, specifically on provisions from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), provide some insight on how we can make improvements in our state.

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Thank you for investing in both halfway houses and community based correctional facilities. As you may know, DRC requires at least 75% of staff providing case management or programming have an associate's degree or higher. Our clients are arriving with more complex needs and our referral sources are requiring more specialized programming. Staff monitor client movement in the community, conduct security screenings to prevent drugs from entering facilities, lead structured activities, and teach life skills. Right now, we compete with retail stores and state and federal agencies who offer more competitive rates. Raises in per diem will be dedicated to staff increases for case managers, resident monitors, and their supervisors.

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).

TREATMENT

We support the governor's investment in recovery and the thoughtful recommendations in the Recovery Ohio report. We are enthusiastic supporters of prioritizing services and coordinating efforts in behavioral health treatment – mental illness and substance use disorders. We look forward to working with you and the administration on making positive changes that are research informed for the families involved with the myriad social and criminal justice systems.

Please call on us for any reason related to the process or to tour a facility. Thank you for your time today. We look forward to working with you. I am happy to answer any questions. Kindly forward any additional queries to:

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Endnotes/References

ⁱ <http://www.brennancenter.org/publication/how-many-americans-are-unnecessarily-incarcerated> page 8