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PSYCHIATRIC
PHYSICIANS
ASSOCIATION

A District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association

Dedicated to promoting the highest quality care for people with mental disorders and to serving the professional needs of Ohio's psychiatric physicians.

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May 28, 2019

The Honorable John Eklund, Chair
Ohio Senate, Judiciary Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Eklund:

On behalf of the more than one thousand physician members of the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association who specialize in psychiatry, we are writing to express our support of House Bill 61 that would exempt certain health provider personal information from public records.

Individuals with mental illness and addiction are arrested and jailed at a high rate due to a number of factors including symptoms of mental illness that predispose them to arrest, such as paranoia, impulsivity and disorganized behavior, as well as criminalization of mental illness and addictions. The public relies upon mental health providers to perform evaluations of criminal defendants to determine how mental health issues may or may not have played a role, and to make recommendations on issues such as competence to stand trial, insanity, and community release, as well as to weed out individuals who are faking mental illness to escape criminal penalties.

Forensic mental health providers are routinely involved in the evaluation of potentially dangerous individuals who are often displeased with the results of the evaluations. In order to ensure that they are able to perform their duties without putting their safety and the safety of their families at risk, the state of Ohio must ensure that forensic mental health providers personal information (including their home addresses) is protected from public records searches.

We encourage you, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to support and vote yes on House Bill 61.

Sincerely,

Victoria Kelly, MD
President

Cc: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

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