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TO: Senate Judiciary Committee
FROM: Gary Daniels, Chief Lobbyist, ACLU of Ohio
DATE: October 23, 2019
RE: Sub. Senate Bill 18 – Proponent Testimony

To Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present proponent testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 18.

You have previously heard from a wide range of proponents advocating for this bill. The ACLU of Ohio is pleased to add its own support. SB 18 has been repeatedly described as “common sense” and, indeed, it is exactly that and more.

States continue to pass legislation of this type and similar protections are included in the federal First Step Act. SB 18 also reflects the current practices of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction. I know DRC’s involvement and perspective throughout this legislative process has been very helpful.

These changes occur in Ohio and across the country out of recognition shackling, restraining or confining incarcerated and accused pregnant women is more than unnecessary. It is harmful. It is a physical barrier to providing proper medical care in numerous ways. It is traumatizing. It is dehumanizing.

While SB 18 is most welcome, let us also not forget this general situation can be improved further through the passage of both Senate Bill 3 and House Bill 1, plus meaningful bail reform. That is, let’s reduce and end the reasons Ohioans are incarcerated in the first place. It is the failed War on Drugs that has directly led to dramatic increases in the number of women incarcerated here and elsewhere.

Finally, we thank all of those who have worked to make SB 18 a reality. This is important legislation that will positively benefit your constituents and Ohio more than you realize. The ACLU of Ohio encourages this committee’s support.