

Chairmen LaRe vice chair White ranking member and fellow members of the criminal Justice committee

My name is Jon Handler and I own Handler Bail Bonds here in Columbus Ohio. I am a third generation owner and have been in business locally since 1960. We have been serving the community for 62 years plus and provide a valuable option for surety bail. We bail out thousands of defendants per year, most importantly we insure that all show up to their respective court dates. Over the years we have evolved to add Mobil check in services (app on the phone) and other options to insure all are held to the standard of accountability. When a defendant fails to appear in court we are the ones who are responsible, we are held accountable to the court. We use our own resources to find the defendant and return them to the court we bailed them out of . It's extremely important to note , This is at zero cost to any tax paying resident. We have the experience and knowledge to make sure they are safely returned to answer to their charges.

Bail reform has been a hot topic recently around the country , anywhere it has been discussed and implemented it has failed. I would like to share with you some statistics recently released from the Harris County Peace Officers Union (Houston Tx) :

Failures to Appear in Court has Skyrocketed .

The failure to appear rate in misdemeanor court over the five-week sample period was 76.09%. That means over three out of four misdemeanor defendants required to be in court simply do not appear.

The Court Backlog for cases has increased as well.

The Court backlog in Harris County has increased by 170% since 2011, by way of comparison, and has steadily increased since bail reform was implemented in the 2017-2018 time period. Another important point via Harris county, misdemeanor charges brought by the police in Harris County only stick 28% of the time. An astounding 72% of misdemeanor cases were simply dismissed according to the data. By way of comparison, only 26% of misdemeanor cases were dismissed in 2011. So much for the basic theory of crime deterrence: certainty of getting caught, swiftness of punishment.

Let's talk about the Price Tag

The report notes that Harris County has spent \$100 million to get here. That is indeed a shame. Of note in this whole equation is that "misdemeanor" does not define the risk of the defendant. High risk defendants are feeding their habits by committing "low-risk" misdemeanors. And clearly, the odds of getting convicted on a misdemeanor are 0.280. That's pretty good odds of not getting caught—in fact, you can guarantee that you are not going to be convicted in 7 out of 10 misdemeanor crimes regardless of what you do, presuming you are caught in the first place.

All communities suffer when people are not held accountable, and this spirit of unaccountable behavior spreads like a curse and emboldens further disdain for our public institutions, which further harms all communities.

I would also like to share with you some recent statistics released right here in our back yard (Franklin county):

Here is a Break down of Bonds posted in the Franklin County Municipal Court
January 01, 2020 through December 31, 2020

Appearance bond's posted- 4,729 (10 percent paid to the court) , 90 percent to be returned if defendant appears to all court dates.

BFOI notice's sent when Defendant failed to appear- 2,015 (43%)

Surety Bond's posted- 2,855

BFOI notice's sent to Bonding Companies - 116 (4%), think about the difference 43 percent vs 4 percent ??

ROR (RELEASED ON OWN RECOGNIZANCE) granted by the Judges- 4,136 (it's important to note franklin county does not keep tabs on FTAs so no data was available) however the sharp contrast between surety and app bonds is extremely obvious.

I would also like to highlight the fiscal note and local impact statement from the Ohio Legislative Service Commission on 5/18/22:

Criminal court impact

The bill will increase administrative costs for county and municipal criminal justice systems through increased hearings and an expedited timeline for hearings, which may require court staff, prosecutors, and public defenders/appointed counsel to be available and work outside of current court business hours. The bill will reduce county and municipal expenses for pretrial detention, increase costs for pretrial supervision, and reduce bond and bail revenues. The magnitude of those changes is dependent on the implementation of the bill by the local courts and will likely vary by jurisdiction.

Lastly , this bill dose nothing to address failure to appear !!! Literally nothing !!! To the committee members what are your answers for failure to appear at the result of this dangerous bill? How would you answer to a victim of a crime with no accountability?? It also prohibits a bail schedule and would rely on text messages (for court dates and other important dates) that clearly don't work when your phone numbers change month to month. How many defendants will have an active number ? How will you verify that ? How will you make sure they don't change it , do any of us know the answer to that? Those of us with real field experience at a retail bail agency will know that.... Short answer it happens, then what?

I can offer other counties and their numbers for examples however the idea of taking accountability away from someone to appear in court is reckless, careless and unsafe. Private

bail has been around for over 100 years and for good reason. We are proud of what we do....
And we do it well.

We have been acting as sureties for defendants in Ohio for 62 years, and we look forward to continuing our work balancing people's right to demand sufficient sureties and the defendant's sureties having the right to provide it.

Thank you