



## CRIME SURVIVORS FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE

November 29, 2022

Dear Chair LaRe, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for accepting my testimony in support of House Bill 699. My name is Dyesha Darby, I am a crime survivor from Lima and the Ohio Statewide Manager for Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice.

Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice represents the voices of over 5,000 diverse victim voices across the state of Ohio. For the past several years, we've advocated for common-sense solutions to safety that prioritize victims' needs, while focusing on stopping cycles of violence in our communities. Our members have advocated for trauma recovery centers – of which there are now eight in Ohio – as well as reforms to increase access to victim compensation programs so that survivors receive the resources they need to heal.

These have no doubt been increasingly difficult times for our communities that are most impacted by crime, but least helped by the current system. I've experienced this pain and turmoil myself.

Our state has taken great strides in adopting proven solutions to violence, but more work remains if we are to ensure that we address the root causes of crime and ensure that people have the opportunity to succeed.

As survivors, what we want most is for what happened to us to never happen to anybody else. That is why we strongly support HB 699's provisions to provide pathways to success for those who are incarcerated, reducing the chances that they will reoffend, and making us safer along the way.

Research has shown that earned credit incentives work in encouraging people to participate and complete rehabilitation programming like job and educational training. When people have these tools, they're more likely to attain stable jobs after they're released and less likely to return to prison.

Ohio offers up to one earned program completion credit for some in prison, but HB 699 greatly expands the program, allowing eligible people to earn this credit more than once. It also expands the cap on participation credits and adjusts earning rates so that Ohio joins other states in allowing participants to earn more time off their sentence.



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Additionally, HB 699 will build on other reforms to improve the transitional control program. Transitional control has already proven to reduce recidivism by providing employment and substance abuse support during the last six months of someone's sentence to facilitate reentry when their sentence is complete.

It's common sense to reduce barriers to success for people who have already been thoroughly vetted and approved for this recidivism reduction program. When formerly incarcerated individuals are given access to critical treatments and support, they can rejoin society with greater chances at being successful citizens.

Lastly, HB 699's strengthening of judicial release will streamline the cumbersome process, preserving public safety resources. ODRC would have a say in rigorously vetting people, and assessing who is ready to return home. This further improves safety in Ohio and helps to stop cycles of crime and victimization.

As crime survivors, we value healing and rehabilitation as pathways to safer communities. The approaches included in HB 699 have been proven to work and are supported by the data. Ohio has taken steps in the right direction, and this legislation builds on those critical reforms that are needed to improve safety.

We urge you to stand with Ohio crime survivors, as you have in the past, in supporting HB 699 to make Ohio safer for all.

Dyesha Darby  
Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice Ohio Statewide Manager